THE LIFE-HISTORY OF A BRĀHŪĪ

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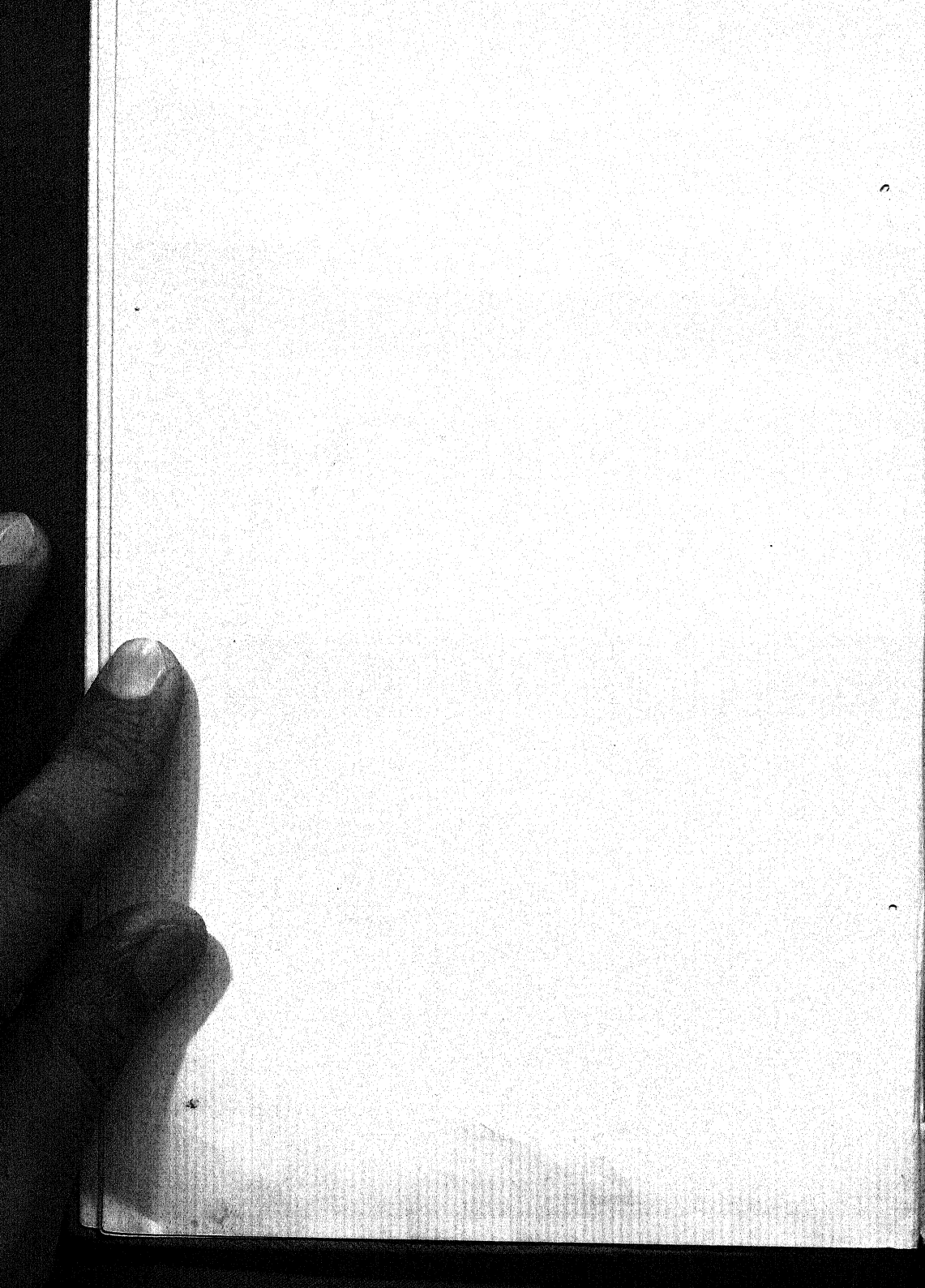

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THE LIFE-HISTORY OF A BRĀHŪĪ

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BY
DENYS BRAY, I.C.S.

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PREFACE

I SHALL tell the tale as it was told to me, jealously preserving its refreshing *naïveté*, its intimacy, and boldness of detail. Mirza Shēr Muhammad, who told it me, is himself a Brāhūī—a member of the Zahrī tribe, and hence a Jhalawān. He began life, like several of his forefathers before him, in the service of the Khān of Kalāt, the head of the Brāhūī Confederacy; he is now in our Government service. He has travelled the length and breadth of the Brāhūī country, cunningly stocking his mind, wherever he went, with the curious lore of his people. His knowledge of all that concerns the Brāhūīs* and their country is remarkably rich; more remarkable to me are his power of giving expression to it, and the detached attitude he is able to adopt towards his own customs. He is, by-the-by, one of the very few Brāhūīs who are literate.

The story, of course, was not told to me in the flowing form in which it now appears. It was told piecemeal and at odd moments, sometimes spontaneously, sometimes in answer to my questions. Though it has taken many months in the telling, it is not complete. How, indeed, could it be? The Brāhūīs are scattered over a wide stretch of country. Little as we know of their

* I have given some account of this Dravidian-speaking people of Balūchistān, and the curious problem connected with their language in "The Brāhūī Language, Part I. Introduction and Grammar," and in the Balūchistān Census Report, 1911.

early history, we know that they are not of one race, but a medley of peoples, inheriting divers traditions and customs from the various stocks from which they originally sprung. Moreover, in the East, much more than in the West, it is the woman who is the true guardian of ancient custom, and a Brāhūī himself cannot lift the veil save from the few women who live within the narrow circle of his family life. As my friend quaintly puts it, it would cost even a Brāhūī of tact considerable time and no little money to mix himself among the women of the country and win their secrets, by pretending to be a holy man versed in charms, a wise man cunning in herbs, or a grave and a pious man.

Yet if the story is incomplete, it is lengthy enough, but surely not wearisome to those who care for such things. To those who have practical dealings with the Brāhūīs, it can hardly fail to be a document of singular interest, and it is with a godfatherly pride that I usher it into a wider world. There is one point on which I may be allowed to forestall and, if possible, to disarm criticism. The spirit of the story seemed to evaporate as soon as I attempted to couch it in the matter-of-fact English of to-day, and it became almost impossible to prevent my own comments from unconsciously creeping in. With the somewhat fanciful style I have adopted, these difficulties disappear. Whatever its disadvantages, it is at any rate akin to the homespun language of the original, and lends itself throughout to an almost literal translation into Brāhūī. Nor does it seem out of keeping with the subject. It helps, I think, to give a glimpse into the workings of the Brāhūī mind, not merely a peep behind the scenes of Brāhūī home-life. And, finally, it has enabled me to keep out of the story altogether, and to confine myself to the tasks of listening, questioning,

arranging, repeating. At this stage I have attempted neither to analyze nor to explain, preferring to leave the story in its simplicity, undefaced by the jargon of science. But questions, suggestions, and criticisms will be alike welcome from any whose interest this essay in Brāhūī autobiography may awaken.

QUETTA,
May 1, 1913.

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THE
LIFE-HISTORY OF A BRAHUI

BIRTH

Desire for a son.

1. In the wide world there's naught man and wife set their hearts on more than the birth of a son. For who would be content to quit this world and leave no son behind? As for a daughter—a daughter is little more than a gift to your neighbour. Yet something is better than nothing, when all's said and done. For it is in truth a sorry mockery for two to wed and have never a child to show for it.

Impotency.

2. So when the months steal by after a bridal and there is still no sign of a birth in the house, it sets folks a-gossiping. And if the wife lose her bloom and grow scraggy and lean, we can make a shrewd guess at the one that is at fault. Her mother's tongue will soon wag to some purpose, despite the love she bore her son-in-law in the first six months after the bridal: there now! didn't she always say he was little more than half a man? a pretty business this for her poor girl! she might have lived and died unwed, for all the offspring she'd ever get from the loins of such a paltry fellow. And she goes from house to house with her whispers and grumbles, and you may be sure it won't be long before they reach the ears of the husband. So if he's wise, he'll hie him to a physician. But if the physician fails to drug manhood into him, it were best he hasten to the mulla, to see what a mulla can do. Now for a piece of silver or a sheep or the like, the mulla will give him

an amulet or a charm that may yet make a man of him. One or other, let's hope, will compass his end. Not that the mulla will be at a loss for a reason, if all will not do. "So 'tis a Jinn that's at the bottom of the mischief after all!" says he, and shakes his head ever so gravely.

Barrenness.

3. But if the wife wax fat and fatter, 'tis on her the womenfolk will lay the blame for a barren wife. And for a wife to be *sant*, or barren, is a very grievous reproach. 'Tis bad enough for her to be *rant*—barren, that is, after she has once been brought to bed: poor soul, her case is then past praying for; for her womb has got twisted upwards, and no power on earth can put it back in place. Nevertheless, she has borne a child to stay her with comfort in her distress. But where's the comfort that shall avail a childless wife in her barrenness? No comfort, but scoldings are her daily portion. Her husband maybe will keep silence for very pride. But his mother will gird at her the more, nor stint her wrathful tongue. A childless wife is a costly guest to have in the house, says the adage, and they let her know it with a vengeance. Hers is a pitiful plight; yet worse lies ahead. For she knows full well that as soon as her husband can scrape the wherewithal together, he will get him another wife to bear him children and rid him of the mockery of his neighbours.

Circumcision one device to overcome it.

4. The very thought will fill the poor woman with such piteous yearnings as may well stir her womb to conceive. But if her womb is not opened for all her yearnings, she will beseech some wise old woman or midwife to help her for pity's sake. Divers are the cures they have to offer. Says the one: "Take a pellet of opium an hour or two before your husband goes in unto you, and you shall see what you shall see." But the other says: no; there's nothing for it but to circumcise her.* So they circumcise her secretly in her

* In circumcisione feminarum abscinditur pars extrema clitoris.

mother's house, hiding the thing from her husband's kinsfolk.

Vows.

5. But if all is in vain, she will pitifully entreat a mulla, or holy man, or some wandering beggar to give her amulet or charm for her need. And many a pretty penny does she spend thereon. Or she makes a vow that she will sacrifice such and such a number of sheep, or shave the child's head, or shear off one of her own tresses—aye, one of those tresses that are the glory of a woman—or do this or that at the shrine of a saint, if so be the saint will fulfil the prayer of her heart. Or she will turn to the Prophet, and covenant that the child born of her shall wear naught but blue or green during the first ten days of the Muharram, in token of mourning for his grandsons the Imāms.

Dedication to God.

6. Or she will make a vow that if the Almighty will but remember her and open her womb, she will sell the child as a slave in His name. She may covenant to do it once and for all on the last Wednesday of the first month of Safar after the birth. Or she may covenant to do it yearly on that day for as many as seven years or more, or even until she die. And the child is sold and bought back. But the money for which it was bought and sold is given in alms in the name of God.

An instance in the Khān's family.

7. The Khān of Kalāt himself has been sold by his mother and redeemed in this wise for the last four generations. Methinks a mighty vow must once have been made when the line was in jeopardy for lack of a male child in the ruling family. Now, fifteen years back it was I myself that sold His Highness, for I was then in his private service. Early on the morning of the last Wednesday of Safar I was summoned into the presence, and the Khān's mother put a halter round the Khān's neck, and the end thereof she placed in my hand, and bade me go forth and sell the Khān, for he was a slave that God had bestowed upon her. So I took the rope, and forth I led my ruler, for all the world as if I had a

camel in tow, and with us went the Khān's brother. To the mosque which is at the gates of the castle I led him, and entered therein. And we sat down, the mulla sitting over against us. So I turned to him, and said I had brought one of God's slaves to market that I would fain sell for a fair price. And for eight pounds of salt and a measure of wheat did the mulla bargain to purchase him and then free him in the name of God. Thrice did I address the mulla, and thrice did the mulla make answer after this fashion. And he loosened the noose from off the neck of the ruler. But the salt and the wheat are not given in kind. Nevertheless, something is given to the mulla and something to the servant for their pains. Yet nowadays 'tis a plaguey scurvy price that the Khān puts upon his head, for five rupees was all we shared between us.

The first signs of conception.

8. Well, Heaven grant that the poor wife may reap the reward for all her amulets and vows and prayers. And if forty days go by since her last monthly course, she looks upon herself as great with child at last, and hastens to tell the glad news to her husband, to her mother and to his. Eagerly they keep a tally of the days as they pass; but, doubtful still, they nurse their hopes among themselves. But once another month is safely over, they spread the tidings among the kith and kin.

The critical period of *drōhuṛ*.

9. Great is now their concern that no food is brought into the house without a bite being given to the wife, lest harm befall her or her unborn babe. During these early months—*drōhuṛ* we call them—she often craves for curious things, whether sweet or sour; and if her craving is not appeased—though it be but an apple or a pomegranate that wins her eye—her womb may fall and the babe be born out of due time, or its eyes will squint, and that we think as ugly as ugly can be. Even a waterskin that is being tanned or a piece of cloth that is being dyed should not come under her eye; for if her

heart should lust after the one or the other, the cloth would surely lose colour or get spotted, or parts of the skin be left untanned. In like manner a mare or a she-ass that is in foal must be given, be it ever so little, of the grass or grain that is the portion of a beast that is standing by, lest desire for it should provoke her to drop her foal out of due season.

Earth-eating.

10. Now there's scarce a woman in the country that does not crave for earth during her *drōhuṛ*. So she is for ever munching *mēṭ*, or fuller's earth, that is brought up from Sind. And, like enough, her ravening for it will grow so great that she will toss sleepless on her bed the livelong night if she cannot come by it. Yet there's danger in the craze, for it breeds spleen or consumption in the poor woman; and though she herself escape scot-free, the babe that is in her womb will surely suffer in her stead. Nevertheless, her kinsfolk dare lift never a finger to stay her, lest her womb drop. But the woman herself, maybe, will go to a mulla or a Sayyad and beseech him to read a charm over a piece of *mēṭ*, that she may eat thereof, and so be quit of the gnawing hunger ever after.

Early miscarriage

11. Yet with all the care in the world *drōhuṛ* is an anxious time. And should a woman miscarry when she is not yet full three months gone with child, she takes that *khām* or unripe thing that comes out of her, and, powdering it all over with antimony, she swallows it whole; for she believes that in such wise will it be given new life, and with luck be born anew in due time. Now, when I first heard of this thing, I couldn't believe my ears, and thought it an old wife's tale; but not once have I heard of it, but again and again, and you may take my word for it that it's common enough. And that it is of some avail, you may guess from the existence of men among us with marks on their nose like the marks of teeth—marks that were left by the mother at the swallowing.

Signs of the sex of the unborn babe.

12. If after three months the wife's flesh is firm and strong and her teats are red, they hold she is great with a female child; but if she grows weak, and her teats are purple and dark, they look to the birth of a son, and surely even from her very weakness does she draw comfort. Others, to make doubly sure, take a louse and plunge it into a little milk drawn off her breasts, and eagerly they watch it as it struggles; for if it dies forthwith, 'tis a sign that a male child will soon lie sucking at those breasts, but if it battles back to life, they must just resign themselves to a girl. And the eyes of the Black Snake, they tell me, are blinded when his path is crossed by a woman great with a male child, and he is powerless to stir or do her harm; but if 'tis a female child that is in her womb, there's no saying what mischief the Black Snake may do. Howbeit, if a wasp or a scorpion sting the poor woman, the child that is born of her, be it male or be it female, will all its life long account the sting of wasp or scorpion as harmless as the settling of a fly.

Various precautions.

13. After she is three months gone with child, the wife no longer does the hard work of the house. Drugs she may not take, nor may she eat food that has been baked overnight, lest the one or the other weaken the babe or impart to it some disease. Into a dark room should she never go alone, for fear of the Jinns. Aye, and it were well she burn some rue night and morning, and let the smoke go up into her clothes, for this will surely keep the evil spirits at a distance. And if there's a death in the house, she must not view the body or set foot within the room where it lies; for should her eye light on a corpse, the babe would sicken in the womb and be born a weakling, craving for overmuch milk—nay, it might even die in the womb, or, if it came to the birth, fade soon away. Against this wasting sickness—*badalō* we call it—they strip a little piece of cloth off the shroud and tie it to the wife's shirt-string. But if a child be

brought to the birth stricken with *badalō*, and there be yet another death in the house, they measure a stick according to the measure of the child, and give it to the dead to take with him to the grave; and this has been the saving of many a child, I'm told. 'Tis an ill omen should the teats drop milk within the first seven months; it is as though they shed tears for the sufferings—pray Heaven it be not for the death—of the mother or her babe. And should the womb drop before the seventh month, in haste they send to the mulla for a written charm to stay the birth.

Distribution of *kōhal* in the seventh month

14. On the new moon of the seventh month seven kinds of grain—to wit, barley, wheat, Indian corn, peas, millet, pulse, and *juārī* *—are boiled together uncrushed in a large cauldron. Seven kinds of grain there must surely be in all; so if they have no *juārī*, they must needs look round for something else. Small dishes of this pottage—*kōhal* we call it—are sent out to the kinsfolk and lady friends of the family in token of the coming birth. The dishes are never sent away empty; each comes back with some trifle for the looked-for babe—a bead it may be, or a strip of cloth, or a small piece of money.

The *shab-zinda*.

15. The following night is the *shab-zinda*, the living night, when the women make merry among themselves. Howbeit the wild folk of the hills know naught of the *shab-zinda*; ill could they afford such merry-makings, poor beggars. But among villagers there's much jollity that night. Till peep of day the women beat the drum sturdily, and the female *ḍōmb*, or serving-woman, of the family sings lustily the while. The *ḍōmbs*, you must know, are minstrels and midwives. Lōṛī they are by race, an alien people who have been tinkers and blacksmiths for generations and generations. At least one family of them is attached to every clan or section amongst us, for they are useful folk, ready to turn a hand to all sorts of lowly work.

* *Andropogon Sorghum.*

Sexual intercourse is now forbidden.

16. The wife is now tended with even greater care. Threads of blue cotton are tied round her thumbs and big toes to shield her against the wiles of evil spirits. Henceforth she must live apart from her husband. Though freed from the drudgery of the house, she is not left to sit idle or at her needlework all day long, but is called upon ever and anon, in kindly joking manner, to be up and about her household duties; for overmuch sitting, they say, turns the face of the babe from the right path, and brings trouble in the hour of the birth. In such wise do the last two months pass over her.

Preparing for the birth.

17. At the new moon of the tenth and last month they call the midwife in. Every day she rubs the wife's limbs slowly and subtly with oil, to make them supple against the hour of the birth. Every morning she gives her a few sips of cold water wherewith to break her fast, that it may wash and cleanse the babe's body.

Hastening on the birth.

18. If the birth be stayed beyond the due season of nine full months and nine days,* they pour water in a pail and set it before a mare. And when the mare has drunk her fill, they fill a cup with the water that is left over, and give it to the wife to drink. Or, better still, they make her pass under the belly of a mare that is in foal. Either way there's a speedy issue for her out of her trouble. And the reason is plain as a pikestaff. If a woman oversteps the natural term of womankind, ten to one she is cursed to go through the twelve weary months of a mare. But it's easy enough to pass on the curse from her to the mare, if only you know the secret.

The beginning of the labour.

19. As soon as the pains of labour are upon her, they bid her deck herself out, by putting antimony to her eyes and walnut-bark to her lips, to redden them withal. Else might the wind strike her, and her eyes be afflicted and her teeth fall out. The midwife comes bustling in,

* Thirty days go to each month.

and sits by her side. She never allows her to fall into drowsiness, but rubs her limbs; the belly is not rubbed, nor even touched. No woman great with child may now enter the house or speak aloud. Nor may a virgin come nigh, for the very sound of her voice would hamper the birth, and heighten the wife's pains. Nor may any *val** needlework be done in the house, lest the womb twist the neck of the child after the same pattern.

Overcoming difficult labour.

20. Should difficulties attend the birth, they throw the blame on the goodman of the house: he's surely on bad terms with his wife, they will say, or harbours a grudge against her in his heart. But if the labour be long drawn-out and their fears wax great, they dip the hoary beard of some reverend old gaffer in a pail of water and give thereof to the sufferer to drink. But if all will not do, they seek the aid of a mulla's charm. And this is the most potent charm they know:

> "*I have no place to dwell in, and my ass hath none;*
> *Spouse of a farmer, give birth, give birth to a son!*"

These lines are writ in Persian on two bits of paper; the one they tie to the wife's thigh, and make her gaze on the other. Many a time has this charm wrought its purpose so well that the babe has been born within half an hour.

The birth.

21. At the moment of giving birth the wife is made to sit on sand. A son, I've been told, is born with his face towards the ground, a daughter with her face towards the mother. As soon as the babe is born, the midwife catches it in her hands. But if it be a boy, she hides the glad news from the mother for a while, calling it a girl; for the birth of a son is of all things the most glorious to a woman, and the joy might prove too much for the mother before she recovers her strength.

Vicarious burial of a twig.

22. Now, if some poor mother has lost babe after babe, and is brought to bed yet again, the wise old women

* Somewhat similar to featherstitch or herring-bone.

will put their heads together and will seek to save the life of the new-born in this fashion. When the pains of labour come upon the woman, they cut a slender twig off some green tree and place it by her side. And as soon as the babe is born, they measure the length of the twig against the measure of the babe, and whittle it down till it is neither too long nor yet too short. Then they raise the cry that the babe is dead. And they take the twig and lay it out and wash it and wrap it in a shroud, and bear it forth to the burial and lay it to rest in the graveyard, for all the world as if it were in truth a dead child. So they return to the house, full sure that the evil spirits have been befooled, and that the new-born is safe from their malice.

The severing of the umbilical cord.

23. Now comes the hour of the greedy midwife, who pounces on the right ear of the mother, and takes off the ear-ring, precious and costly though it may be. Then she holds the babe with her left hand, and in her right she takes a razor, calling on the old people (the grandfather standing without) to pay her money in abundance for the work she has in hand. Yet is she paid according to the rate that is set—a rupee, or maybe two, for a boy, and half the sum for a girl. When she has been given her dues, she severs the cord, crooning the while, "Darling mine, I sever thy cord for all kinds of sweetmeats and pleasant foods," and the like. She cleans the matter away right cunningly, for therein, say old midwives, lurk the seeds of smallpox, and shrewdly she sees to it that no blood falls on the babe. The navel is bound with a thread of blue cotton. But the cord that is severed is taken away and buried where no dog may hap upon it; for should it, for lack of care, fall a prey to a dog or other beast, the babe grows restless and a lusty squaller.

Coins used to prevent

24. Now it sometimes so happens when a woman is delivered, that her womb issues forth and will not

return to its place. At the birth of a first-born there's some danger of it, and still more when the babe is a sturdy rogue and a stubborn that will not be coaxed forth into the light of day. For the midwife urges the poor woman to choke down her breath, that the babe may be forced to quit his lodging within her. And the womb comes forth with her straining, and there's a mighty pother to get it back to place. So the midwife takes some pice and other copper coins, to the value of a rupee maybe, and washes them and ties them together into a ball with a bit of thread or a thin rag. Then she thrusts the womb up, and thrusts the coins in after it, that they may press on the womb, nor suffer it to fall forth. And the woman is made to lie quiet on her back, with her legs raised two feet or even three above the level of her head. There must she lie for three full days, poor soul, nor ever turn on this side or that, nor lower her legs from their perch. For if the womb drop again, she will be in sorry case indeed. the womb dropping.

25. As soon as a son is born, they break the news—and a deal of fuss they make over it—to the father who is waiting without. Forthwith he fires three shots with his gun, or haply five or seven or nine or eleven. Hearing the shots, the serving-men know that a son is born, and rush off to the neighbours with the news. He that is beforehand is given *mistāī*, the reward for good news—a robe of honour it may be, or a piece of money, a rupee or more. But he that comes lagging when the news is stale is given naught. Announcing the birth of a son.

26. At the birth of a daughter no shots are fired and there are no rewards. Now if the first-born is a girl, they hold that the wife is stronger than her husband. This, to be sure, does her little harm. But the husband in the Zahrī and other parts is laughed at by his fellows, and is beaten seven times with a shoe, or is made to furnish a feast, as a fine for his How to avoid a second daughter.

first failure to beget a son. And the midwives have this device to turn the womb for the birth of a male child. As soon as a daughter is born, they give the mother a broth made of a fresh-killed chicken, spiced with cinnamon, pepper, and the like; and in due course, they vow, will she be blessed with a son. But if nothing be done, she will bear daughter after daughter; and if there be no change at the third, seven daughters will be the lot of the unhappy father. This is what the midwives say, and surely they should know; but how far a man of science may believe them, let the man of science up and say for himself.

Dēm-dīdārī.

27. Forthwith they wash the babe and put it in a *kafanī*—a cloth that is cut like a winding-sheet—and swathe it round so that only its face can be seen. But before the father or the old folk or the aunts may have a peep, each must promise the mother some trinket for her new-born, or give her money wherewith to make it an ornament hereafter. This gift we call *dēm-dīdārī*, or the seeing of the face. And if a kinsman be absent and comes back after many days, he will have to pay *dēm-dīdārī* for all that. And they call in a mulla or some wise old man to whisper the *azān* in the right ear of the babe, and in its left ear the *takbīr*, those holy Arabic words that are the summons and prelude to our prayers.

The first nursing.

28. And now they bring the babe to the wife, who has been laid on her back in a bed covered with warm bedding. Henceforth they hail her as "mother of the child." And they bathe her breasts with warm water, and draw off a little milk. First she suckles her babe on her right breast. If it takes the teat with a will, it is well. But if not, mother, father, grandfather, coax it in turn, saying: "Suck the breast, there's a dear, and I'll give thee a nose-ring of gold or an ear-ring, or this or that," proffering it trinket after trinket that a child may wear. And at whatsoever

trinket the babe first sucks the breast, the same it shall receive hereafter from him or her who promised it. Now most good parents keep their babe for the first six days in a *chaj*, or winnowing-basket, that God may vouchsafe them full as many children as the basket can hold grain. Over the basket they throw a light cloth, and place it at the mother's side under a *pādēnk*, the three-legged iron stand whereon the kettle is boiled. But some folk will have nothing to do with a winnowing-basket; it harbours epilepsy, they say, though how or why I am at a loss to think. So they lay the child in a sieve, that good luck may pour upon him as abundantly as grain pours through a sieve.

The *sar-gasht.*

29. Meanwhile kinsfolk and neighbours hurry to the house to offer their good wishes, each with a dish of sweetmeats, and a rupee to boot if it be a son, but no more than half if it be a daughter. Now this gift is called *sar-gasht*, or passing round the head; for sweetmeats are taken from each dish and flung over the heads of the mother and her babe. The children in the room scramble for the sweets in high glee, and even the *ḍōmb*, or serving-maid, joins in the frolic. In the end they part the money and such of the sweets as are left over into four shares: one they give to the midwife, another to the child's nurse, a third to the serving-maid, while the fourth is set aside for the poor. This, to be sure, is the seemly thing to do. But some folks may be too poor to afford it, and some have no nurse or serving-maid at all. So these give a rupee or two to the midwife, and keep the rest for themselves. Nor are the neighbours to go home empty-handed; each is given *chilla-bōī*,* a present of a little aniseed and some sweetmeats.

The wake.

30. During the first five nights the house fires and

* Literally, apparently, "the forty days' impurity smell"; but this compound word has lost its original meaning. The *chilla* is the forty days of a woman's impurity after child-birth.

lights are kept alive, night in, night out, and the kinsfolk hold a wake—and all for fear of the evil spirits. The women watch turn by turn at the mother's side, for she must never lie alone. The men sit without, making merry and cracking jokes. The serving-maid sings, and the womenfolk join in. All the fifth day they are busy making clothes for the new-born: a shirt (and let it be of silk), a head-dress of red cloth, a thick binder, and a long narrow bandage. Before sunset they truss the babe up in the garments, and lay it under a *drungī*—a wooden frame one or two feet high—and over it they spread a quilt to keep off the cold.

Passing the child round the circle.

31. At nightfall they place a cup filled with milk at the babe's head, and into it each of the women puts a piece of silver according to her means. The cup, money and all, falls in the end to the lot of the midwife. There she sits by the side of the babe, and keeps up a fire of banter as each lady steps forward, promising her a deal of trouble when *her* time for childbirth comes. Seven kinswomen seat themselves in a ring round the babe. In that circle, I warrant, no place will be found for a widow or one that has been married twice. Nay, loyal wives of loving husbands and happy mothers of many children must they be. Each in turn takes the babe for a while on her lap, and offers up a prayer for its long life and the welfare of the parents. And after the babe has gone the round, it is placed last of all in the mother's lap. But the men sit without, listening to the music of the *rabāb*,* the *sirōz*,† the *punzik*,‡ and the drum, for these have now ousted the homely *dambūra*,§ save in the wilder parts.

* An Afghān stringed instrument, the strings of which are plucked by a small piece of wood, called *shābāz*, held in the right hand.

† A Lōṛī stringed instrument played with a bow.

‡ A reed instrument.

§ A three-stringed instrument played with the fingers.

32. In honour of a son two sheep are slaughtered, but only one, you may be sure, if it be a daughter. Some of the blood is caught in a cup, and in it they dip the babe's finger, and make the mother do likewise to herself. The flesh is then cooked, but the neck is set apart, with the bone unbroken. Preparing for the feast.

33. When night comes on, they give the child its name. Now they can choose whatsoever name they will, but 'tis a seemly custom to give it the name of some worthy forefather who is no more. And if there's no one in the family of that name alive, 'tis so much the better. Some there be who give their child during his tender years the name of a bitter plant, such as Kabar, Hēshū, Pōghī for a boy, and Mangulī or Jaurī for a girl. And their reason for this is two-fold. If a child be got after anxious prayer, they give it a bitter name that God, who is the sweetest of all things, may spare it to them. Moreover, while the child is yet young, he will, sure enough, often vex his father and mother, and perforce they must rebuke and chastise him; and truly it were ill done should they chastise and rebuke by name one who bore a name time-honoured in the family. And if a child is beset by misfortune from his birth, we sometimes lay the blame on the name, and seek better fortune in another. Even men of ripe years, dogged by ill-luck, often change their name, in the hope that they will thereby change their luck. Choosing the child's name.

34. So they give the child its name, and all the friends and kinsfolk gathered in the room lift up their hands, calling down God's blessing on it. And the name is announced to the mother, who is lying in her chamber apart with the ladies; and these also offer up prayers to the Almighty. And congratulations are shouted from all sides to the father and mother. The naming of the child.

35. The livelong night is passed in mirth and merry-making, in singing and joking, smoking and the drinking of tea. The meat that was set on the spit is cooked by The feast.

the grey of the morning, and is brought and placed before the guests, who sit and feast, and when they are filled, go each man to his own house. But the neck that was set aside is cooked and brought to the mother. And when she has eaten her fill of the meat, the neckbone, still unbroken, is hung up by the door or in a corner, that the child may hold his neck straight and walk upright through life. But the other bones are gathered together with care and placed in the skins of the sheep, to be hereafter buried in the village graveyard. Howbeit some folk are giving up this good old custom.

Preserving mother and babe from evil spirits.

36. But while all these ceremonies are afoot among the kith and kin, there's a deal of fuss made over the mother and her babe in the birth-chamber. As soon as the child is born, they paint a mark in indigo on all four walls after this fashion ⊹, that no evil spirit may venture nigh. Some there are who strew *pīpal** about the house, for a witch will never visit a dwelling where *pīpal* is. And at the head of the child they stick a knife point downwards in the earth, and there it must remain during the *chilla*, the forty days of a woman's impurity after childbed. And should the woman chance to go alone out of doors, she must be sure to take a knife with her. For witches and Jinns are ever on the look-out to do mischief. But a sharp knife or a sword is a safe defence, or *rak*, against them.

Guarding the babe from *kaj-jēnging*.

37. From the first the babe must be hedged round with watchfulness. The treasured things of the house—beads, jewels, charms, and the like—are dipped in a cup of water, and drops of the water from the cup are sprinkled in the babe's mouth. If a tired wayfarer chances to come along, his little finger is straightway washed; if a string of camels pass by the house, or a caravan laden with treasure, a bit of the rein of the leading camel, or a lock off a box filled with the treasure, is washed, and a drop of the water is put in the babe's

* *Ficus religiosa.*

mouth. The old granny or the aunts must ever be on the watch in this matter: for if they act not in such wise, the babe, they say, is stricken with *kajjēnging*, and in a trice it turns blue and is dead before long. Even until the new moon must they keep guard over the babe. And if a man should come in from his travels and would fain see the babe, he must first wash his face. For should he have passed a corpse or carcase on the way, and look upon the new-born with face unwashed, it sickens and grows weak. Hence it is that grandmothers are ever loth to show off a new-born till full fourteen days have passed.

Blue markings on a new-born babe.

38. Now our babes are born with light blue patches, three or four inches across, on the buttocks and at the back of the leg above the knee. On some babes there are patches also above the waist and under the shoulder-blades; but patches on the buttocks and above the knees there are on every babe. But in a month or so they fade away and are gone. Now once I asked a wise old dame the why and the wherefore of these patches, and this is what she told me. As soon as a woman conceives, said she, her monthly flow is stopped. And all that is pure therein forms food for the babe in the womb. But the noisome and poisonous portion thereof gathers in and round the womb. And oftentimes it stains the woman's cheeks and forehead with dullish patches that we call *rām*, and darkens the colour of her teats. And do what one will, one cannot hinder some of it from falling on the babe when it is brought to the birth. But Heaven be praised, careful wiping will soon wipe the patches away; and in a month or six weeks they are gone. Else were there danger that they would ripen into boils before long. Well, this is what she told me, and I know her for a wise old lady. But whether she is right herein or whether she is wrong, the man of science must be the judge. Now some of the refuse will surely find its way into the babe's belly, and sore will

be the trouble if it be not dislodged. So they lose no time in giving the babe some *gugul*, or bdellium gum, mixed up in sugar and ghee. Within three days will this purge rid its belly of the *kalāghō*, as we call it, for it is black like *kalāgh*, the crow.

Head-forming.

39. Now our womenfolk think an egg-shaped head so ugly that there's no end to its ugliness. So it's a blessing that the whole body of a new-born babe is so soft and tender that they can shape it to their will. First they bind a bandage round the babe's forehead as smooth as smooth can be, and underneath its head they lay a soft pillow, stuffed with uncrushed millet or peas. For if the pillow were hard, the babe would never lie on the back of its head, but would be ever turning on this side or that. But on a soft pillow the head lies flat on its back, and in time is rounded to shape. Well, as for the shape of a boy's head some folk care little. A boy is a jewel after all, be the shape of his head what it may: all the same a boy with a mortar-shaped head like a Paṭhān is mighty uncomely. But the rounding of a girl's head is the concern of one and all. And to make matters doubly sure they bore three or four holes in her ears and thread them with blue cotton. And with ears bored she will not toss her head from side to side, I warrant, but will lie quiet with her head set plumb on the pillow of millet. Now the rounding of the head must be taken in hand betimes, and for the first forty days at least must it be kept up. Yet the saying goes that the bones of the head are not wholly set until the child can say "*khal*," or stone, with the best of them.

Moulding the features.

40. But though a good round head counts for much, it doesn't count for all. Throughout those first forty days they never let the babe's features alone. Even at the *dēm-dīdārī*, the first viewing of the face, they anxiously measure the babe's mouth, and if it be bigger than the span of a finger-joint, they take a small ring and press it to the lips to bring the mouth within its

compass. The lips themselves they rub to make them thin. And the nose is pinched and pressed softly upwards. For there are few things more unsightly than a large mouth and blubber lips and an overhanging nose. Yet in a maiden I wot of something that is worse still. For a maiden had sooner be deaf or blind or halt than have her *baunrī*, or the whorl of her hair, at all forward on her head. In very truth there's no more unlucky thing in the whole wide world than this. And if the nurse's shrewd fingers cannot coax the *baunrī* towards the back of the head, that maiden will die an old maid, a *kalmāṇ* as we say, you may take my word for it.

Shaping the body.

41. Nor is it on the head and face alone that they try their cunning. Twice a day, when they give the babe its hill drugs in a little ghee, they rub its body deftly with oil, and press the palm of its foot upwards. For a foot should be *mōza-pād*, or shaped like a boot, with instep well-arched—not flat like the ugly flat foot of a bear. For though a large head is the mark of a noble, a large foot is the mark of a slave, as the saying is. And *kamān-pād*, or bowlegs, are just about as bad. So we stretch the babe's legs out straight and bind them together, and stuff wads of rag in between, that the limbs may grow straight as an arrow, not curved like a bow. Likewise are the arms bound straight to the body. Nay, the whole body is trussed up, so that only the face peeps out from the swaddling bands. And in this fashion the babe must remain for nine months, or for four at the least. Howbeit the bands are unloosed twice a day, in the morning and again in the afternoon, that the babe may kick its chubby limbs about. Now it is not only to straighten the limbs that we truss a babe up in this fashion. For should a babe be scared out of its wits by some malicious demon, its limbs would get twisted from sheer fright if they were free from their bands, and would never return to place. So you see there's work enough in our nurseries to keep the women-

folk busy. But best leave it all in the hands of one wise dame. For what says the good old proverb? Too many nurses spoil the babe's head.

The *chilla*, or forty days of impurity after child-bed.

42. Nor is the mother forgotten. If the season is warm, they give her a bath after the birth. She must else wait a fortnight before she is bathed; yet is she rubbed down twice a day with oil. And as soon as she is delivered, she is given some *garmāna*—a heating food made of ghee and molasses boiled with drugs midwives wot of, but will never, never tell to others. And of this *garmāna* all the womenfolk in the room partake. Then for the first six days she lives on wheaten bread and a little ghee. Full fourteen days must she lie in the birth-chamber, one or other of the women watching at her bedside, lest she lose heart or be assailed by evil spirits. But when the fourteen days are out, she is bathed in a bath of warm water. And while her head is being washed, she keeps a clove in her mouth to ward off a cold. And after her bath she dons clean clothes, and the clothes she has worn are given to the midwife. Then, if there is nothing amiss, the midwife leaves the house, only coming in every other day to rub her limbs and bind her up, that her womb may not drop. And when another week is over, the mother is bathed yet again, and may now issue abroad from the house. And on the fortieth day she takes her last bath of all, and is clean of her uncleanness, and may live once more with her husband.

CHILDHOOD

43. A man who would search out the spirit of the people may well learn more from one of the lullabies with which our mothers rock their babes to sleep, than from a wilderness of ballads. Not that their lullabies are in the Brāhūī tongue any more than our ballads. Brāhūī, I suppose, lends itself ill to verse, for poets we have none among us. To be sure, some mother or shepherd may string together a few words in our own tongue, but it's sorry doggerel at the best. So we go to Balōchī for our songs. Now here is a lullaby a mother sings to her baby girl. And therein I would have you note that, though she duly thanks God who has bestowed a daughter upon her, she cannot hide her pitiful longing for a son. Then, motherlike, she weaves dreams of that which is to come. And she praises her daughter for her flocks and herds, for her beauty and the beauty of her hair, for the bounty of her table, and the long wooing and wealth of her lord: Lullabies.

Lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Lulla, Moon-face, lullaby.

God bestowed thee, God the Giver:
May His gift be mine for ever!
Lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Lulla, Moon-face, lullaby.

Sons and colts are in God's hand,
God's to keep and God's to send;
Were they goods on a market-stall,
Princes would buy one and all;
Beggars would have none at all!
Lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Lulla, Moon-face, lullaby.

Mistress art thou over damsels,
Mistress over kids and lambkins,
Over fatted kine and camels.
Lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Lulla, Moon-face, lullaby.

Thou art Queen among thy sisters,
Like the moon 'mid starry clusters.
Lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Lulla, Moon-face, lullaby.

My lady's locks are plaited strands.
Thick as a camel's hobbling-bands.
Lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Lulla, Moon-face, lullaby.

My lady's tent is high and wide,
And thirty paces long beside;
It heads the camp, and from afar
Guests come from Bhāg and Kandahār.
Lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Lulla, Moon-face, lullaby.

Her lord owns flocks and herds that thrive,
Proud lord of Kēch or chief of tribe.
Three weary years he comes to woo,
Aye, thrice he wears out either shoe.
Close packed as dates his gifts are stored,
Like barley stacks his golden hoard.
Lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Lulla, Moon-face, lullaby.

And here's one of sterner stuff she sings to her infant son:

Dear-heart, True-heart,
God make thee Brave-heart!
Thine be a steed of fiery mettle,
Thine be a seat firm in the saddle.
Four fair wives mayst thou embrace:
Milk-white, Honey-sweet, Sun-bright, Moon-face.
Thine be no death on the bed of a craven,
For death on the field is the road to Heaven.
Dear-heart, True-heart,
God make thee Brave-heart!

44. And when a youth comes to manhood, he will often boast among his fellows that with his mother's milk he sucked in the songs she sang—songs of a manly life and a warrior's death, fronting the foe. And if a man turn tail in the day of battle, we hold him no true son of his father, but the bastard son of a faithless woman who foisted a knave upon the world. Their effect on after-life.

45. Now if a babe is born with teeth cut even within its mother's womb, it's a sorry look-out for its parents. Many are the alms they bestow in the name of the saints, for if the ill-luck be not turned aside, theirs is like to be an untimely end. And should such a babe die in babyhood—and oftentimes it so falls out—folks will shrug their shoulders: 'twas a luckless child after all; what a mercy its bad luck fell on itself, and not on another! Nor will the mother or father be wroth if they hear what folks say. For in their heart of hearts they are not over-grieved that the ill-luck has been taken from them. And if a babe cut its teeth before it is six months old, there's ill-luck in that also. And though matters are not so grave, 'twere best to offer up sacrifices at the shrines of the saints. For we hold that a girl should not cut her teeth before the seventh month nor a boy before the ninth. Girls are ever ahead of boys on the road to youth. A girl, we say, is like barley that sprouts up apace; but a boy is like the more precious wheat that is slow of growth. But if the cutting of the teeth be stayed a month or more beyond the due season, the neighbours will say that the child is sickly and its bones are cold. But the mother will turn on them with the proud rebuke, "Nay! 'tis the noble blood in his veins." *Dandān-rōdi*, cutting of the teeth.

46. Now were I asked what our womenfolk hold the unluckiest thing in the world for a child, I should be hard put to it to think of aught more unlucky than for a child to cut its upper teeth first. The very hint of it upsets our Ominous to cut the upper teeth first.

women. And should one question a mother touching her own child in this matter, out of malice or maybe in sheer innocence—for menfolk are often ill-versed in such things—she will stand aghast. And in hot anger she will cry out: "Peace! May a stone strike you on the mouth! How dare you utter so evil a thing?"

Mother and child go a-begging.

47. Now at the *dandān-rōdī*, or cutting of the first teeth, some good mothers—and in Jhalawān it's common custom—bind a fillet of raw wool round the child's head, and take him beggar-fashion from door to door among the neighbours. At seven doors do they come a-begging, and the neighbours of their kindness dole out grain—and money into the bargain if they have the wherewithal. The grain she gets is cooked uncrushed and given in alms. And we call this pottage *kōhal*, the name we give the pottage that is sent out before the birth.

Gām-burri, or the first steps.

48. When the child begins to toddle, they do not as yet make it known abroad, but set a day and call in a few of the ladies of the family and others of the kin. Early in the morning they bake a baby loaf, and bring the child in, decked out in new clothes, and make it stand before the mother and the company that is assembled. Then they throw the loaf, and with loving words bid the child go and pick it up. So off it toddles after it. And the loaf is broken, and each of the company is given a piece thereof. Then they sit them down to a meal, and food is also given in alms to the poor and among the serving-men. This custom we call *gām-burrī*, or space-cutting.

Weaning.

49. Eighteen months is the term for suckling a boy a girl is suckled full a year longer. One afternoon towards the close of the term—on a Friday, if it be possible—they put seven dates in a pot, and bid the child take from it as many as it please. And according to the number of dates it takes do they reckon the number of days it will still trouble its mother for milk. And the mother dips some wool in that black and exceeding bitter

drug *sabr*, and places it over her breasts. And if the child comes pestering her for milk, she puts it off, saying that a cat or a dog has bitten her teats, and that they are of use no more. To quench its thirst they give it water ever and anon, and they roast a piece of meat and steep it in vinegar, and give it the child to stay its hunger withal. And this is *khadān kishking*, or thrusting from the breast.

Preparing for the feast of *sar-kūṭī*.

50. Now when the child is two years of age, it's high time for *sar-kūṭī*, or the first shaving of the head. Some there are who do it earlier, and some perforce later—each according to his means, for there's money to be spent. It will cost a man of rank two hundred rupees or thereabouts, and a man in the middle walk of life half that or perhaps a trifle less, while even a poor man cannot escape for less than thirty rupees. On the morning before the appointed day one of the kin attended by a serving-man goes from house to house, calling the neighbours and kinsfolk to the feast. So the guests assemble in the afternoon, and all that night is passed in mirth and merry-making.

Smearing the child with henna.

51. At nightfall a large pot of henna, that we call *hinnām*, is brought in, and with the henna they smear the hands and feet of the child. And if it's a girl, this is done in the assembly of the women, as she lies in the grandmother's lap, or—if the grandmother be dead—in the lap of the mother or some lady of the holy race of Sayyad. And after the child has been daubed with the henna, they take the pot to the ladies who are foremost in honour among them. But if it's a boy, a company of aged dames and serving-maids carry the henna, covered with a silken kerchief, into the assembly of the men. They come bearing lights in their hands, and all the way they sing the marriage song, "*Halō! hālō! halō! vashēn halō!*" In the midst of the assembly is seated the urchin on the lap of his grandsire or of his father or some reverend Sayyad. And when they have smeared

his hands and feet with the henna, they pass the pot round the room, first to the honoured guests and thereafter to the others in order. But when it comes to the younger men, they grab enough and to spare of the henna and hide it in their hands. And as soon as the company of ladies take their leave, they pounce on the father, aye, and the grandsire too if his age but allow of it, and bedaub them, beard and garments and all, with many a merry trick and jolly quip. For youth will have its joke. And now they call for the minstrel to gladden the night hours with music and song. And the company listens at its ease, smoking and drinking tea, until with the dawn they sit them down to the food that has been got ready overnight.

The shaving of the head at the shrine.

52. Then with drums and other music they take the child to the shrine of the saint to whom the family is wont from of old to devote the first locks of their children. For each tribe, nay, each clan, each family, has its own peculiar saint. At the shrine they shave the child's head, and offer up their prayers. And leaving sweetmeats and money for the attendants at the shrine, they make their way back to the house for the feast that awaits them. But if the shrine be a goodly way off, so that the company cannot visit it, they shave the locks at home, and send them in a bag to the shrine. So now you know what is in those tiny bags you see hanging to the poles at the shrines of the saints.

The necessity for *sunnat*, or circumcision.

53. It is our pious and bounden duty to circumcise a male child betimes. For until he be circumcised, he is no true Musalmān; and a goat or a bird he kills is unclean—albeit, if the need be great, and there be no Musalmān to hand, he may kill and eat. Hence, if money's not lacking, some perform the ceremony even on the sixth day after the birth, and some at the sixth month. But these for the most part are men of substance. For though it costs less than a marriage, the feast of the circumcision costs more than the first

shaving of the head. Full four hundred rupees may be spent by a man of rank over it; a well-to-do man will spend nigh half, and even poorer folk must rake together close on five score rupees. Thus it is that two or three or four years may pass with the rite unperformed, or even ten or twelve. Each father must consult his own purse. Yet the sooner 'tis over the better; and if a boy come to the vigour of youth uncircumcised, it is surely an offence against God.

Gud-burrī, or the cutting out of the clothes.

54. A month or so before the day appointed for the ceremony, the ladies of the kin and neighbourhood meet together in the house for the *gud-burrī*, or the cutting out of the clothes. And when they are assembled and the serving-maids fall a-singing, cloth is brought in to be fashioned into garments for the boy. Garment by garment they measure off the cloth; and as they measure each guest flings a handful of sweetmeats over the cloth, according to the custom we call *shinikī*. And the serving-maids and children scramble among themselves for the spoil. Each lady takes to herself a garment—shirt or trousers or whatever it be—which she shall sew for the lad, nor ask payment for the sewing. But there's other work for their fair hands to do. There's a new quilt to be measured for the lad's bed, and there's *hinnām* to be ground on the hand-mills for the ceremony, and there's the wheat to be cleaned for the feast and sent to the mill. And when the work is done, if the master of the house is a man of some estate, a sheep is killed and roasted and set before the guests. So when they have eaten and are filled, they go each to her own home with the garment she is to sew.

Other preparations.

55. Nor is the father to sit all day with idle hands. He and his brothers must busy themselves henceforth getting things together for the feast, and setting all in readiness for the ceremony. And when the lad's clothes are made, they appoint a day according to the new moon, and it is seemly that the day should be a Friday.

Duzzī hinnām, the private ceremony

56. Two nights before the great day there's a private gathering of the family and near friends. And when the sun is set, the father brings the lad in, and seats him between a Sayyad and some old friend of the family who has himself children in plenty. Now the lad is perched on a bed—but they call it his *takht*, or throne—and one is chosen his *shā-bālav*, or the King's body-guard, to bear his dagger or sword and attend him wherever he goes. And tea is passed round. Then while the *shād-mānī*, or wedding measure, is played on drum and *surnā*, a serving-maid ushers in a company of old ladies bearing the henna and singing, "*Halō! hālō!*" In their midst is the mother herself, if so be her age allow her to quit her seclusion. And all lift up their hands and pray for the lad and his parents. Then an old worthy from among them takes the henna and smears it on the hands and feet of the lad, beginning with the right hand. And that the henna may not drop to the ground, they wrap his hands and feet with red cloth. So the henna goes the round, each putting a little on his finger. And the young bloods again filch more than their share and make merry with the father. And, truth to tell, the mother fares no better in her assembly at the hands of the younger among the women.

The *chāp*, or country-dance.

57. The fun grows fast and furious late into the night. They beat on the drum and play on the *surnā*, and dance right merrily, the ladies dancing in one ring, the men apart in another. Now the dance of the country is called *chāp*, and in olden days men set great store by it. Up to the reign of Khudādād Khān it was accounted no small thing in a young man to be master of the art. But times are changed, and though the Khān and his brother are fond enough of the dance, and can foot it nimbly with the best of them, folk at large have grown careless and are giving it up. Howbeit to this day you may see goodly dancing among the alien Dēhwār of Kalāt and the people of Mastung and Zahrī and Ziārat Nichāra.

And indeed it's a pleasant sight in those parts, and a pleasant noise too, for there's much clapping of the hands. You must never call it *nāch*, for *nāch* is the dance of the dancing-girl.

58. On the morrow there's ever so much bustle in the house, for all the friends and kinsfolk are bidden to the feast in the evening. And that which was done in the bosom of the family the night before is now done openly in the assembly of the people. The lad is anointed with the henna, and the night is passed in singing and dancing, smoking and tea-drinking. A few friends stay to see the night out, and break their fast in the house right early in the morning. The *fāshī hinnām*, or public ceremony.

59. Towards noon, when all the guests are assembled once more, they sit them down to the feast. And it's well on in the afternoon before they rise, for many a fat sheep has been killed that morning in their honour. Then forth they bring the youngster, clad in the brave clothes the womenfolk have wrought him, and stand him on a *kaṛsān*, or wooden pot. And the father, according to his means, makes over to his son a plot of land or a horse or a sword or a gun. And if he be old enough, they bid the lad, still standing on the pot, thrice repeat these words that all may hear: "Be it known to one and all that such and such a horse or sword or plot of land that once was my father's is now mine!" This is that gift we call *salvāt*, and that which is given in this wise remains to the boy for his very own, nor have his brothers part or parcel therein. To be sure, if a man has no land, and is too poor to make any such gift, he must needs leave the *salvāt* alone. And indeed the custom is everywhere on the wane. *Salvāt*, or the father's gift.

60. Then they make the lad to sit down on the *kaṛsān* with his face to the north. At his side stands his *shā-bālav*, or King's bodyguard—some good friend of the family, or maybe an elder brother—with a drawn sword in his hand, the edge thereof turned to the sky and the The circumcision.

back towards the boy. And they bid the boy gaze steadfastly at the sky: there'll be a mighty curious bird hovering overhead by-and-by, with the prettiest of green feathers that ever were; and though no one else may see it, he'll see it, never fear, only he must mind and keep a sharp look-out all the time. So as soon as the youngster gapes at the sky, the barber whips out his razor, and off goes the foreskin. Then with one accord they all urge the boy to give the barber (in Jhalawān it's a serving-man who does the deed) a good thwack. And so he does, if he can for fright; but if he whimpers, one of the company thwacks the barber in his stead, but it's all in fun. And the barber picks up the foreskin, and, running a red thread through it, ties it round the boy's ankle. There it remains till his wound be healed, and thereafter it is buried under a green tree, that the lad may be fruitful in his generation. But many folks do not tie the foreskin round the lad's ankle, but bury it forthwith in damp earth, thinking thereby to cool the burning of the wound.

The mother's prayers.

61. All the while the mother is waiting anxiously within the house surrounded by her womenfolk. On her head she puts a hand-mill, and her sisters and daughters put on theirs a Korān, and with faces turned to the west they pray for the lad. But as soon as the circumcision is over and done with, and congratulations are shouted on all sides, the hand-mill and the Korāns are laid aside.

More presents.

62. Then they carry the lad indoors, and guest after guest comes with his *sargasht*, or offering of money. It may be as little as four annas, it may be as much as ten rupees. For a man will consider his means in this matter, and be moreover mindful of what he himself got aforetime in like case from his host, or what he may look to get hereafter. And as each comes up with his offering, some old gentleman of the party, other than the father, stands by to receive it, bawling: "Mr. So-and-So has very kindly

offered such and such a sum." Then sweetmeats and dates are handed round, and the guests take their leave.

63. And when the guests have departed, the lad is brought inside to his mother and laid on his bed, the womenfolk fussing around. And until he's whole, the kindred watch at his bed a-nights, singing songs to pass the time. He may eat no meat nor take salt with his food, but lives on wheaten bread with a deal of sugar and ghee. And the barber attends him with his simples and drugs, and gets board and lodging for his pains. But within a week, or maybe ten days, the lad is surely himself once more. And first of all as ever is, he's bathed and taken to a shrine, and thereafter to his grandfather's house or the house of some other near kin. And there, I warrant, they stuff him well with sweetmeats before they send him home. The boy's after-treatment.

64. When a lad is three years old or thereabouts, he's given his first *shalvār*, or trousers. Not that the wilder folk think anything of it if he remain unbreeched till he sheds his first teeth. A girl should be put into trousers as soon as she is two, or at the most four. Nomads, to be sure, think there's naught unseemly if their womenfolk never wear trousers at all—save, of course, at their marriage, for there the *shalvār* has no small part to play. But whether lad or lass, they do not wear white, nor are the skirts of their shirts hemmed, until they begin to shed their first teeth. Thereafter the colour of a lad's trousers is white or blue. But the colour of a girl's trousers is red or yellow or green, but never blue or white. And whatever be the colour of her trousers, her shift will be of another colour, and her head-dress of yet another, for womenfolk take delight in wearing divers colours. Yet black is the colour of a woman's shift in Jhalawān. Children's dress.

65. There's some to-do when a child's teeth begin to drop out, be it boy or girl. The mother must get out her needlework, for there are fine new clothes to be made. And at the shedding of the first tooth they wash The shedding of the first teeth.

the child's mouth with salt and bitter oil, that the teeth to come may be white and shapely. The child is then sent out of doors, and is made to jump, tooth in hand, shouting at each jump :

Oh crow, thy teeth are black! look, mine are white!
Oh crow, thy teeth are crooked, mine aright!
Oh crow, thy teeth are ugly, mine how bright!

Then they bury the tooth under a green plant or treasure it up in the house.

The shedding of the double teeth.

66. Well-to-do folk now set their boys to learn the Korān, and their girls to needlework. But nomads send their lads out to tend the sheep, and as for needlework, little do they reck of it. The two double teeth which are the last but one on either side of the upper jaw are called *akli*, or wisdom teeth. For we hold that a child that has shed them—and shed them he should after his eleventh year—has reached years of discretion. And henceforth we rebuke and punish him, as one that knows right and wrong.

Close of boyhood.

67. With the cracking of his voice the lad has won the first stage to youth, and the goal is reached when sex overcomes his dreams o' night. 'Tis now high time for the old folk to bestir themselves and seek him out a wife. No ceremonies mark this change of life. Nevertheless, here and there may be found a mother who will pass sweetmeats round among the women of the house, and chaff and have her laugh, when the lad first puts hand to razor to shave the hair about his middle.

Close of girlhood.

68. When a girl's breasts begin to round themselves full, the mother milks them, so they tell me, to press them down that they may not swell big; and if they hold milk, she takes a little ash and mixes it with salt to rub them withal. Twice or thrice does a careful mother act in this wise before her daughter ripens to youth. And with her first monthly course she is girl no more. Forewarned, she tells the thing betimes to her mother. And at the setting of the sun the mother takes three

small stones and places them thus: ° ° °, and bids her leap over them thrice; for if this be done duly and in order, three days and no more will be the span of her monthly issue. Now and then, to be sure, she may be troubled longer, but that it never lasts beyond five or at the most six days, I have the warrant of an old dame who knows all about it. And surely to a man who ponders over such things, 'tis strange to find three stones on the threshold of womanhood, for it's three stones a husband throws when he banishes a wife from bed and board.

BETROTHAL

Age for betrothal and marriage.

69. It's common enough for a girl to be betrothed while she's yet a child. Once she has blossomed into youth, her parents have neither peace nor rest till one comes along to ask for her hand. For 'tis a dangerous thing to keep a daughter over-long in her father's house. If they marry her off before she has left her childhood behind her, there's no great harm, so she be at least twelve. But most folk bide their time. It's rare as rare can be for a slip of a boy to marry; one should surely wait for youth. Nevertheless, mere boys are married from time to time—witness the infant marriage which the Musiānī chief arranged for his little son Zahrī Khān, so great was his fatherly love. And a youth should not take his elder to wife. For how shall a stripling and an old dame live together in unity? Mockery and scorn will be their portion.

Inter-marriage in the family.

70. Best of all is wedlock of cousin with cousin, for so is the stock kept pure. And if two brothers are on good terms the one with the other, gladly do they draw the bonds together by the marriage of their offspring. Even if their brotherly love has waxed cold, small wonder should a man fain heal the breach by wedding his son to his brother's daughter. In such case he will put others off with a soft answer, should they hint at a match. To be sure, a brother, if he will, may at times get out of such a marriage for his girl, yet cause no offence. Thus, if his nephew has already taken another wife, or is still unripe for marriage, a man may marry his daughter where he will, and welcome.

71. And if a youth marry not his cousin, let him at least marry into a family knit to his own by marriage from generation to generation. A man calls such a family his *shalvār*, for trousers are, as it were, the wedding-dress of a woman. In Jhalawān there is scarce a clan or family without its own *shalvār*; some may have but one, others may have several. Thus the ruling family, the Ahmadzei, have three *shalvār*: the Iltāzei of Bāghbāna and Kōṭra, the Gichkī of Panjgūr, and—since the days of Mīr Nasīr Khān II.—the Naushērwānī of Khārān. The Shāhīzei Mēngal of Waḍ are the *shalvār* of the Jām of Las Bēla; they are also the *shalvār* of the Hamalāṛī Bīzanjav of Nāl; and these again are the *shalvār* of the Gichkī of Kēch. The Zarakzei and the Bōhirzei of Zahrī are *shalvār*; so are the Bōhirzei and the Khānzei of the Mūla Pass. The Sāssōlī Hōtmānzei are *shalvār* both of the Shāhōzei Khidrānī and the family of the chief of the Bājōī. Inter-marriage in the *shalvār*.

72. But gone are the days when a man would never look beyond his *shalvār* for a wife. The ancient *shalvār* is out of fashion: men look on it askance. In the good old days a man's first thought was for family, and money was an afterthought of the over-canny. His dearest aim was to marry within his own ancestral *shalvār*, or worm himself into one still better. For blue blood, not common blood, makes good fighting stuff, they used to say. But when Nasīr Khān II. died, the old feudal days died with him. For Khudādād Khān, who came after, was never happy save when in arms against his own people. And all unwittingly has British rule hastened on the decline. It has given peace in our time, but with peace the folk of Jhalawān have lost their martial spirit and found a marriage-mart for their women in the rich land of Sind. And the *shalvār*, once so fair, so honoured, so cherished, is now a sorry patchwork of rents and tatters. Of a truth it barely holds together at all! The decline of the *shalvār*.

The ideal bride-groom.

73. Before matters come to a betrothal, the youth and the maiden must pass muster before the jealous eyes of the womenfolk of either family. And there's a world of talk this way and that over the good and the bad they see in them. Thus he who would take unto himself a wife must have the wherewithal to support her. He must have land or flocks or herds or camels, or he should follow the plough, or make his living one way or other. And if he would find favour in the eyes of the maiden's family, his hair should be long and his beard thick, the bridge of his nose should be high, his eyes like twin almonds, his countenance fair. A sure shot, a rider who can ride a good race, a skilled player on the lute and the harp—and he's all that a man should be.

The ideal bride: her modesty.

74. And above all things, let the maiden be a maiden that's modest: not over-brisk, nor a gadabout, bold of face, of proud temper, nor one who is for ever on the laugh. The Balōchī proverb, methinks, is not far wrong:

A laughing girl and a frisky bay
Will both soon weary of their play.

And that a girl may grow up to modest womanhood, we do not let her play with the boys after she's ten. Nor may she join in rough games—games where it's all romping and shouting. Rather let her stick to her *shashshuk*, that merry game the girls play with six stones, or let her play with her dolls. Mighty fine dolls they are, and dressed up ever so bravely. And one who would learn the customs of the people may well do worse than watch the little lassies playing with their dolls. For the whole of life, from the cradle to the grave, is enacted in small on this puppet-stage. And for modesty's sake a girl may seldom look at herself in a glass. Nor may she redden her lips or put antimony to her eyes before she marry. And they tie her hair in ugly fashion on her head; for a

girl's beauty should be treasured up for her lord. So careful are we of the modesty of our women.

75. Yet we think the world of a comely woman. And that you may know what we deem comeliness, here's a Dēhwārī couplet the Lōṛi sing: Her looks.

Look at her eyes, when you go, first of all,
Then at her lips, and her teeth last of all.

Black and large and shaped like almonds should her eyes be. The lips should be thin, and the teeth small and white. And long black hair is the glory of a woman. Then, if brow be broad and open, face round and fair of colour, nose high, hands and feet tiny, fingers long and slender—and what more should a man want? Unhappy, and thrice unhappy the girl, whose hair is scant and brown, whose chin is long, whose forehead is narrow. In whose eyes, I ask you, shall she find favour? But still worse is the plight of the wench, the swirl of whose hair is forward on her head. There'll be no husband for her, I'm thinking.

76. And among the well-to-do they look to a girl to be nimble with her needle, and cunning in the weaving of carpets. But nomads care little for such things, poor beggars: so she be sound of lung and limb, a hard worker, one that can grind corn, pitch tents, load up an ass well and briskly, put a good foot forward, who cares whether she be fair or ugly, modest or brazen? Her accomplishments.

77. Now if a lad's marked out for marriage with his cousin, it's all settled from the first. He's betrothed, he's married, and there's an end to it. There's no beating about the bush, no weighing of the charms of the lass or the prowess of the lad. He must just put up with his lot. Why, it may all be over and done with before they are born. For if the wives of two brothers are great with child, there's often a sweet covenant between them to wed son to daughter, so A cousin-marriage is plain sailing.

God bless them in this wise. Very dear friends will often show their lovingness in the selfsame way. It's even done when the one has a boy a few years old, and the other is great with child. And on the sixth night after a daughter is born, they throw a red head-dress over her cradle in token of the betrothal.

Preliminary visits of the lad's mother.

78. But a marriage outside the family is no such simple affair. Folks then go soft and warily to business. The mother of the girl, to be sure, must needs possess her soul in patience till one approach her with a proposal for a match. Yet if a nod or a wink can smooth the way, an anxious mother is neither backward nor bashful, I reckon. But the mother of a son must bestir herself as soon as he comes to the vigour of youth. Whenever she goes forth to a wedding or a mourning, she keeps her wits about her, and shrewdly scans the maidens of meet age and rank. Once she has lit on a helpmate worthy of her son, she'll find some excuse or other for going to the girl's house day by day. And she brings with her some trifling gift, and decks herself out in all the finery and jewels her house can afford, that all the world may see what great folk they are. And by-and-by she will get her chance, and with a passing jest she will let the maiden's mother see which way the wind blows. Then, if she finds her of like mind, she will break off her visits, for they have served their purpose.

A *ḍōmb* woman acts as go-between.

79. Home she goes and tells the father how the land lies. Now a dutiful wife can soon mould her lord to her will. So if he agrees, she sends a serving-maid to sound the girl's mother on the match, but still in a roundabout manner. Off bustles the serving-maid, and praising her master and mistress to the skies, she broaches her errand at the end of her rigmarole. And if she finds the lady of the house on her part not unwilling, she saunters back home. At the door stands her mistress, anxiously awaiting her, and vowing all sorts of

gifts to the saints in whom she puts her trust. "Are you a lion or a fox?" is her eager greeting. And, forasmuch as she comes crowned with success, the serving-maid replies: "A lion! and want a lion's share!" Together they enter the house, but she's much too high and mighty to do aught but grumble at all her toil and moil, until she's appeased with some gift. But a gift soon sets her tongue a-wagging: "I ups and says this and that, says I, and what-d'you-call-her says this and that and t'other, says she." And it's all repeated over again to the master of the house. So they frame yet another message for the serving-maid to take; for a single visit, you must know, can never bring matters to a close. Even so do the mother and father of the girl talk over the happenings of the day. But on both sides it's all done in whispers, and the thing is kept dark, lest someone hear of it and put a spoke in their wheel.

The go-between pays more visits.

80. So the serving-maid trudges off once more on her errand. And this time she returns with a plain answer: let them furnish jewels and carpets and what not, and find money in plenty for the wedding—and we shall see what we shall see. And to put the good faith of the lad's people shrewdly to the test they pitch their claims monstrous high. Thus Jhalawāns of estate will stand out for a couple of handmaids, all kinds of ornaments, and a set of furniture for the house: to wit, six carpets; a *shifī*, or hanging carpet; two pairs of *khartīr* (large saddle-bags they are, that do service as boxes); two pairs of quilts; as many felt coverings; a set of vessels; and ever so much more. And there's often a deal of heart-burning in the matter. For with a lass of tender years, it's a mighty chancy affair: if she die before the wedding, there's a grim loss of handmaids and all. Well, the lad's mother talks things over with his father, and if all goes well, they pack the serving-maid off with their answer. But all the message she's given to take back is that she might look in again on the morrow.

The girl's family consult together.

81. When she's gone, the mother of the maiden takes counsel with her husband, and in whispers presses him for his consent. And if there are grown-up sons, they are suffered to have their say. Yet with the old folk of one mind in the matter, small wonder if the sons chime in. For a mother, as I have found myself, can wean a son of his stubbornness in her own good time. And when all are of one consent, the master of the house calls together his brothers and other weighty men of the kin, that matters may now go forward in due order. So they let the lad's father know that they await the coming of some friend who would speak to them further touching the thing he wots of.

A friend is sent to negotiate.

82. On this hint he sends some worthy to make sure that the maiden's father will verily take the lad for his son-in-law. Now on the first visit the only answer they vouchsafe him is that he'd better come anon; but mind he doesn't forget to tell his friend that the young lady's father is as good a man as he. And curt though the answer, he takes cheer from it. So when two days have passed, off he goes again, and is told—yes, the lad's a likely lad, that they'll not gainsay; oh yes, they'd be pleased enough to take him in the family; and so, if his father's ready to put hand in pocket, let him come forward openly like a man; if not, there's an end of it, and let's waste no more talk about it.

Of *shīr-pailī*, the mother's milk-share.

83. Now every Brāhūī, whosoever he be, looks to the groom's family to stand the wedding feast, and to furnish clothing and ornaments. And every mother in the length and breadth of the country claims *shīr-pailī*, her milk-share, or wage for the suckling of the bride. Never does she forgo it, or abate a jot or a tittle of her dues; so jealous are womenfolk of their ancient rights.

Of *lab*, or bride-price.

84. But nowadays we take *lab*, or bride-price, into the bargain. Two generations back the very word was unknown. 'Twas in Mastung that the custom had its birth, I'll be bound; for the folk of Mastung are all

traders at heart, never above picking up a trick of the trade from their Paṭhān neighbours. From Mastung it spread through Sarāwān, and from Sarāwān it spread to Jhalawān. And now all the world goes haggling for the price of his daughter. In olden times a man of Jhalawān would have held his manhood cheap to have done the like: was his daughter a slave to be sold in bondage? nay, with honour should she enter her husband's house, and with honour should she there be entreated. But in these latter days the Jhalawān has grown ashamed of his threadbare *shalvār*, and doffing his old rags, he hunts and grasps for a fat bride-price with the best of 'em. And, forasmuch as it's a new-fangled custom, there are as yet no rates set. So there's much ado bargaining for lands or money or flocks or herds. The higher a man's rank and the greater his substance, the more will he claim. As for poorer folk, ill-content with what they may look to get from one of themselves, they bundle their women off to Sind—for all the world as if they were taking them to market.

A famous case in Jhalawān.

85. And it's not only the poor folk either. For I could a tale unfold, how one of the proudest families in all Jhalawān packed away its ancient *shalvār*, and stooped to give its daughter in marriage to Sind, all in the hope of getting a fair round sum out of the bargain. 'Twas in sooth a princely bride-price that the greedy father claimed—ten thousand rupees, so I've been told. And ten thousand rupees the suitor covenanted to give him. But when the betrothal was over, not ten but one thousand was what the funny fellow sent along. And the father was so wroth, he would take never a penny of it. Nay, for very pride he even paid the marriage expenses himself, down to the uttermost farthing.

Of *nishān* among certain Jhalawāns.

86. Now, the Māmasanī, the Bīzanjav and the Sājidī differ herein from other Jhalawāns, for they have taken on the customs of the people of Makrān, whose language they commonly speak. Instead of *lab*

they claim *nishān*. Twelve household servants or their value in land and water is the rate among the chiefly houses for both *shīr-pailī* and *nishān*. To be sure, some portion thereof is surrendered back again by-and-by; but the rest is the property of the bride in her husband's house, to do with it as she please. And when she dies, it falls to her issue or other heirs. Such indeed are the rights of her heirs in the matter, but God knows, there's often enough a mighty lot of quarrelling over it.

Arranging a deputation to the girl's family.

87. But we left the lad's father all agog for the return of his friend. Now as soon as he hears his news, he sends back word that it's all one to him how much the maiden's father may think fit or his counsellors either; his purse is very much at his service; but he'd like to send a few gentlemen to receive his open consent in the matter, if he'd honour them with a welcome. For you must know that a consent given to one man, and couched in guarded whispers at that, is not enough. An injured family would fare ill in a suit, as you may guess, were that all the promise that had been breached.

The *rabbālav*, or deputation, arrives.

88. So when the afternoon is drawing to a close, three or four gentlemen (and a pious man will take good care a Sayyad heads them) set out as *rabbālav*, or ambassadors, for the maiden's house. And one receives them well and graciously some paces from the gate, and leads them within, where the maiden's father is seated with his sons and brothers and one or two elders. And *salām alaik* being answered by *v'alaik*, they sit them down, the guests ranged on one side, their hosts over against them on the other. Thrice do they ask after the health of each other and the health of their sons and their brothers and the rest. Tea is then brought in. And not until they have drunk of the sweet green tea, do they pass the pipe around. For smoke is a bitter thing, and 'twere ill should it come foremost in an affair of marriage. But if a man be poor and cannot offer tea, he gives them *dīr-o-chilum*, water and a smoke, instead.

89. Then one on the host's part asks the guests to give their *ahvāl*, or news. So up speaks the Sayyad or other spokesman of the party. "Great is God," says he, "and our Faith is secure. Much mention of you do we make in our prayers. Well, Mr. So-and-So bade us come hither to talk at large regarding this *kār-i-khair*, this matter of peace. Glad were we to be bidden on such an errand; and right glad are we to see you face to face. As for the rest, all's well!" And again inquiries after their health are bandied to and fro. Then the spokesman on the other side—for the master of the house holds his peace—turns to his fellows and craves leave to give the news in return. And with one voice they bid him speak on. So he begins, using the selfsame set words. "Our good friend here," he continues, "has called us in likewise to talk over this *kār-i-khair*. Surely it was God brought you hither to our great content. Furthermore, all's well!" And twice again each asks with a smile after the health of the others.

The *ahvāl*, or interchange of news.

90. So with a friendly laugh they set them to the business they have in hand. "And now, sir," says the Sayyad, "what think you? Give us, I pray you, a straight answer in the matter." "Aye, let us hear, sir, what you truly think," says he who has up to now spoken for the master of the house. And the master of the house makes answer in this wise: "Glad indeed am I that you, reverend sir, and you, worthy gentlemen, have honoured my humble roof with your presence. The bonds of fellowship betwixt Mr. So-and-So and myself are strong and steadfast. Yet, my friends, you know me well of old. Never would I have lent ear to such a request, were it not for the holy Sayyad and these our well-wishers and dearly beloved. 'Tis for their sake alone that I lay this heavy burden upon me, in that I take the lad unto me for my son. Nevertheless, other matters there be that you wot of, and these I leave to you to dispose as you will." So the spokesman turns him to the Sayyad.

The giving of consent.

"Reverend sir," says he, "to you we offer our congratulations, and to our host we offer our thanks, that he has thus entreated you with honour, and has not turned you ungraciously from his door. Yet those other matters concerning which we must presently speak will need no end of careful thought." "We thank you kindly," says the Sayyad. "Were our host other than he is, we would never have crossed his threshold on such an errand. But he's all you have said, and more also. Much as we've heard of his courtesy, it falls short of what we have now seen with our own eyes. But with your leave we will depart and offer our congratulations to our friend, who is also, we would have you know, a fine gentleman and a worthy. And so set your hearts at rest." "All very well!" says the master of the house, "but a man utters one thing aloud, and whispers another in his heart. Is it fools you're making of us?" "Tut! tut!" says the Sayyad, "where's the wit that could befool your own? 'Twas only for a straight answer that we came at all." "Then sit you down again and eat," says the host, "for all that's in the house is yours." "Excuse us now, I prithee," says the Sayyad, "we shall be coming day after day to your house over this matter, and much will it please us to eat of your food anon. But now give us leave to depart, lest our friend grow over-anxious." So off they go, and tell the lad's father all that has passed.

Fixing the betrothal expenses.

91. Once the maiden's father has thus given his assent in open assembly, the betrothal is accounted firm-set. Yet it's not so very firm-set either, as many a one has learnt to his cost. Even though nothing be meant amiss, yet for his honour's sake and the sake of his daughter a man may still make some show of wavering. And the lad's father must go hereafter ever and again to the maiden's house, accompanied maybe by a friend or two, to consult with the elders concerning the expenses of the betrothal. And the elders, I warrant, never leave his elbow: had he allowed for this? had not that been for-

gotten? For it rests with them to see that he stray not from the beaten track in the matter. Now you may reckon the cost of a betrothal at a fourth of the cost of a marriage. Thus a marriage will cost workaday folk in Kalāt five hundred rupees or thereabouts; so such will have to spend a hundred rupees and upwards on the betrothal. It soon mounts up—what with the ring, and the silken head-dress, and the raiment, and all the good cheer that has to be furnished. For be a man never so mean, he will have to covenant for a couple of sheep, four maunds of flour, as much sweetmeats or more, twenty pounds of sugar, and a pound of green tea, to say nothing of the tobacco, firewood, and all. And they run the tale over again and again; and when they find that naught has been overlooked, they bid him get everything together, that a day may be appointed for the assembling of the kith and kin.

The lad's father gets things together.

92. He's now on his mettle, raking together the wherewithal in hot haste, that all the world may see he's not the pauper they thought him. Nor dare he allow the maiden's father time to alter his mind. And when all's ready, he sends him word, and sets a day and a time for their coming. So early on the morning of the appointed day he summons one of the other party as *kāl-khwāh*, or master of the feast, and in his presence he buys the sweetmeats and the sugar and what else there may be to buy. And he sends the good store over to the maiden's house with the message that he and his friends will follow before dusk. Then he passes word the round of his kin and near friends to bear him company at the meeting. And the maiden's father does the like on his part. Yet both keep their following down to a score or so on either side, with an eye to the money that will have to be spent.

They meet and discuss the marriage expenses.

93. That afternoon the father sets out for the maiden's house with his son and the *rabbālav* and other followers. At the door stands one or more to bid them well-met and

lead them within. Then follow inquiries after their health, and tea-drinking and smoking, and the giving of news on this side and that—in short, all the ceremony of the first visit of the ambassadors. Then up speak the spokesmen of the parties, each of the two fathers holding his peace, lest the other take offence. A mighty deal they talk of the marriage, and what it will cost the lad's father. And in their talk they set it double and treble the true sum, but all for show and to do honour to the maiden's father. For thus men may know that he's no happy-go-lucky man of low degree, glad enough to welcome the first-comer, so he come to woo. And the spokesmen on the other side fall to, urging them to abate their demands: this might surely be left out, or that cut down a bit. But it's all make-believe; for the true cost is reckoned out when the parents and the *rabbālav* meet together in private hereafter.

Sharbat-khōrī, the drinking of the loving-cup.

94. And when they have talked so much about it and about, that they can talk no more, they lift up their hands in prayer, beseeching the Almighty to bless the parents. And congratulations are shouted all round the room to the lad and his father, who are seated between two Sayyads or other old worthies. Then loving-cups filled with syrup are brought in, and offered first, as is meet, to the Sayyads, then to the lad, and thereafter to the assembly in order. Each takes the cup, sips it twice, and passes it on to his neighbour. Not haphazard has been the brewing of the syrup. All that morning were the womenfolk of the house at work on it, summoning to their aid true wives of loving husbands and good mothers of many children. And as they mixed the sugar with water and spiced it with cardamoms and cloves, the *ḍōmb* for a while sang snatches of the jolly wedding-song, "*Halō! hālō!*" Never may friend of mine drink from a loving-cup brewed by a widow or one forsaken of her husband, for the fate of the young bride will surely be the like.

Part of the *lab* is handed over.

95. Then they bring in dishes of sweetmeats covered with a fair kerchief, and place one before each of the company; but nomads and needy folks give dates in their stead. Now the sweetmeats or dates are not eaten in the assembly; each guest clears his dish and stows the dainties in his napkin, to take them home anon. And lo! the dish that was set before the lad is not sent empty away, for this is the hour when his father must pay over a portion of the bride-price; and the sum he puts in the dish will vary according to his estate, his rank, and his tribe. A Sarāwān of high degree will give a thousand rupees; fifty may have to suffice if he's poor; in Kalāt it may range from a hundred to twenty, and in Jhalawān from fifty to five, each spending according to his means. And one of the maiden's household takes up the coins and drops them again into the dish one by one, so that all may know by the clatter how much the dish contained. And the maiden's father takes it away and gives a portion of the money to the mother, to have some ornament made withal, or some garment, which shall be her offering to the bride at the bridal. And having paid up like a man, the lad's father takes his leave and departs home with his following.

Recurring betrothal expenses.

96. Now although there's always much ado in settling a betrothal feast, it does not always take place; it rests with the maiden's father to demand or forgo it. And if the two households are close friends, he will surely forgo it if the wedding comes off within six months. Otherwise the lad's father will have to put his hand in his purse. And it must needs be a long purse, for two to eight sacks of wheat and ten to forty sheep will not be overmuch for a feast among the well-to-do. But though he finds the good cheer, the feast is always held in the maiden's house. Yet are the ladies of his house bidden thereto, if the two houses are not over far apart. But even so, one at least should come to bring the festal raiment for the maiden: shirt, trousers, head-dress,

shoes, and a pair of ear-rings of the kind we call *panaṛā*. And every six months henceforth until the marriage the lad's household must furnish the maiden with a full set of raiment. And on every high day and holiday they must send her food, receiving food in return. And whenever the lad's mother comes a-visiting, she must come with some small gift, though it be but fruit, for to come empty-handed would lack courtesy. And the maiden's mother will surely choose to do the like in return, though less is expected of her.

Of the maiden herself.

97. Little enough have I said of the maiden herself; but what's the need? Hers is no voice in the matter. When her father and mother talk the betrothal over, she should be neither seen nor heard. A wise and gentle mother will doubtless break silence when alone with her daughter, and will tell her of the virtues of the chosen youth—aye, and of his blemishes too, I reckon—admonishing her how she should bear herself in her new estate of life. And among folk of high degree and substance a kindly father will be glad enough to hear that the mother has won an assenting smile from his little maiden. But after all is said and done, it matters little what she thinks; and if she demurs, they pinch her for her pains. (Never take stick to a girl! it makes her mulish and stubborn.) And whenever the women talk of the betrothal in her hearing, she hides her face for very shame, and runs from the room, leaving them all laughing at her. And should some lady of the lad's house come on a visit, the maiden asks prettily after her health, and then goes out on some household errand; if she dawdle, her mother soon sends her packing with a frown. Not until the third day after the wedding does she lay aside her bashfulness.

Ceremonies among the women.

98. So when the men assemble together for the betrothal, the maiden leaves the house or hides herself where none can see her; for the chaff of the ladies covers her with confusion, albeit she's not a little

proud to find herself betrothed. Now in settled villages it's the custom for the womenfolk to pass the day after the betrothal feasting in the maiden's house. The lad's mother comes along early in the morning, with the ladies of the kindred and neighbourhood in her train. And she brings with her some sweetmeats and a silken head-dress and a ring. Best of all is a golden ring set with an emerald; but a silver ring will just have to do, if one's too poor. So they come to the house, and are greeted by the maiden's mother and her ladies. And presently they beg her bring the maiden in. Reluctantly she goes out, the lad's mother at her heels. And together they usher in the maiden; but she's so bashful, there's a deal of dragging and pushing. So they seat her between them, and the lad's mother does all she knows to coax her to unveil her face. And when at last the veil is laid aside, she covers her head with kisses, blessing her a thousandfold, with many a tender questioning touching her health. But all the answer the maiden can summon up is a modest moving of the lips. Then the old lady decks her with the silken head-dress, and on her little finger she places the ring—but it's a mighty tug she has to give before she can get hold of her hand. And it's the custom here and there for each of the near kin to take a ring from her hand and give it to the maiden. And so, showering congratulations on both mothers alike, they sit them down and eat, for two sheep have been slaughtered for their pleasure.

The lad visits the girl's mother.

99. And here's a custom Sarāwān folk have borrowed from the Afghāns. The maiden's mother gets ready a feast for a small company, and lays in piles of sweetmeats and walnuts and cocoanuts and boiled eggs, painted ever so prettily. Then she sends word over to the youth: please, won't he come and pay her a little visit? So he comes with a few comrades. And when they have feasted on the good things set before them,

he goes alone into the mother's apartment. Right gallantly he kisses her on head and hands; but it's his hands only that she kisses in return. And they sit and chat for half an hour or so. Then back he goes to the company of the men. And the dish of sweetmeats and eggs and nuts is brought in, meetly covered with a kerchief and a *lungī*, or scarf. One of his comrades takes the gifts on his behalf, but he himself piles pieces of money on the empty dish. And some worthy in the room counts out the money with a lusty voice. It may be ten rupees or twenty or forty, but it should surely overtop the worth of the *lungī* and kerchief and all. Now the *lungī* and kerchief are called *kīsa*, a scrip or pocket, and the money that the youth gives the lady of the house is called *drōtī*. But the visit is called *pai-vāzī*, or the loosening of the feet, for the youth may henceforth come to the house when he will.

He doesn't see his bride before marriage.

100. Yet he never sees his bride before the night of the bridal, however much he may yearn for a peep. Wandering nomads, to be sure, have no *parda*, and a nomad youth will not be hard put to it for an excuse to be off to the encampment, when betrothals are in the air, and so win sight of the girl. But even though the sight please him ill, he must just make the best of a bad bargain. Not but what you won't find doting parents once in a way giving in to their son's whimsies. But most parents will make short work of them. And how they bend a rebellious son to their will needs no telling from me, I suppose. If the young folk ever chance on one another, when the households are on the march maybe, the youth will strive to get a good stare at the girl, and trick her into laughter. But she hides her face in shame, and runs away sobbing, leaving the youth gaping after her. For the maiden is fearful of her parents. But methinks there's another fear in her heart: haply he'll espy some fault in her that shall eat

into his soul, or ever they are knit together and love has a chance to grow. So there's a world of difference, you see, between us and those that practise that loose custom of *palaghāṭ*, whereby a youth, once he's betrothed, is free to live with his wench.

Gud-burrī, the cutting out of the bridal clothes.

101. A month or so before the day appointed for the wedding, the ladies of the kin on both sides and a few of the neighbourhood are summoned to the youth's house for the *gud-burrī*, or the cutting out of the clothes of the bridal pair. Now this ceremony must fall on a day of happy omen: not on a Saturday, for goodness' sake, nor on a Tuesday, nor yet at the *kam-nōkī*, or end of a month. And the ladies assemble, bringing sweetmeats with them —howbeit in Jhalawān sweetmeats play no part in the ceremony. Then one in their midst, far-famed as a faithful wife and a proud mother of many children, is called upon to begin the task—God wot, they never call upon a widow, love she her children never so dearly. Forth she steps, and with many a pious "*Bismilla!*" she takes up the cloth, first for the bride's raiment, then for the raiment of the groom. And the serving-maid beats the drum, and with "*Halō! hālō!*" she sets the wedding hymn a-ringing round the room. As each garment is measured off, the ladies scatter their sweetmeats over the cloth. And the scattering of the sweatmeats is called *shinikī*. All the while they are on their guard that they snip off nothing into the fire. For should the tiniest bit of the cloth get burnt, it will bode ill for the happiness of the pair. And each of the kin picks out a garment, promising to fashion it against the day of the bridal. Yet I'm thinking the lad's mother will not get off scot-free, for she will have to see to any garments that are left over.

The joviality

102. Not that it's all work and no play at the meeting. For a sheep was killed that morning to give them good

cheer. There's jollity enough, what with the singing and the chattering and the laughter. Many a merry jest is aimed at the lad's mother, and much merry abuse into the bargain, the maiden's folk being ever readiest with their shafts. Jest she parries with jest, but abuse she must parry as best as she may, with never an unkind word. For is she not the mother of the groom, the strong one of the pair? Now if the two households dwell far apart, there's no need for the maiden's kindred to embark on a journey, and all to attend this ceremony; the lad's folk will just have to make shift by themselves. And the poor, to be sure, may be too poor to find the wherewithal for such a merry-meeting. Yet even they will have to scrape something or other together, for go forward the ceremony must. of the meeting.

103. So the days pass on towards the wedding. And if the maiden ripen to womanhood, there'll be no long tarrying, I'm thinking. Howbeit a death in the household or among the kin will stay a wedding forty days perforce, and maybe much longer. Now when all's ready and a day has been appointed between them, the two fathers summon around them their kin and their friends and their well-wishers in the neighbourhood. And the lad's father sends forth his company, with a Sayyad foremost among them, to the maiden's house; but he himself stays behind. Right graciously are they greeted by the maiden's father and his following, and with customary courtesy the news is given on this side and on that. Deputation to the maiden's house.

104. Then the Sayyad broaches the errand of the day: "Kind sirs," says he, "Mr. So-and-So, like other good fathers all the world over, would fain see his son married and settled down. And it's on this behalf that he's sent us hither. Now what think you? Is it your will that the stripling should marry at this season? And the wedding expenses, what of them?" And the spokesman on the other side makes answer after this fashion: "Right glad are we to bid you welcome, and *Barām khwāhing*, demanding the marriage.

to hear all you have to say on this *kār-i-khair*. And if herein we may speak for our good friend, you need fear no let or hindrance from him, for willy-nilly the grain must to the mill, as the proverb says. Yet you know the way of the world. Our friend is a man of high degree; his is a proud family that has spread itself abroad; his friends are well-to-do and many. In sooth, 'twill be a goodly throng that will flock to the wedding. But you would never have come here at all, I take it, if you hadn't first totted up the cost." "Very true," says the Sayyad, "very true indeed; to be sure, it will cost a pretty penny. But first let's hear what you have to say about it." So the other turns to his comrades for their counsel: as men of the world, they could make a shrewd guess at the cost, he should think; times had changed for the worse; things were not as they used to be; everything had grown plaguey dear; otherwise, for all their friend would have cared, the lad might have married his maiden and welcome, though all Mr. So-and-So brought were a coarse-spun shirt and a cup of cold water; as it was, both were men of estate, hide-bound by the time-worn customs, whether they liked 'em or not; a truce then to talking, and so to business like men of the world.

Of marriage expenses.

105. So they go over the old story; all about the mother's milk-share and the bride-price and the good cheer that must be furnished without fail. And when the spokesman begins to prate of the wedding feast, the more he talks, the more he piles on the cost, until it amounts to double and treble the true sum. But the Sayyad and the elders on either side put in their word, and entreat him until he comes down to the sum that will verily have to be spent. And it's no small sum either. Why! be a man's estate never so lowly, he must furnish ten sheep at the least, some twenty maunds of wheaten flour, ten seers of ghee, ten seers of tobacco, half that of sugar and of oil and of

henna, ten camel loads of firewood, a seer of *muzvāk*—the walnut bark for reddening the lips—and a seer of gum for the womenfolk, to say nothing of turbans for the *ḍōmbs*, head-coverings for the ladies, barley for the horses, and all the sweetmeats and dates. And men of rank will furnish twice and thrice as much again, with tea and rice and other dainties to boot. But even that is but a tithe of what some lord might lavish on a feast.

Bijjār in Jhalawān

106. So the company goes back to the lad's father, and if he finds that what he's made ready falls short of the mark, he's all of a fluster, and hurries around to borrow wherever he can, money or grain or what not. Now in Jhalawān it's the custom for a man to go from house to house among his kin and his friends, his chief and his tribesmen, gathering contributions towards the marriage. This is the custom we call *bijjār*. And whatever *bijjārī* he gets from his friend now, his friend will call upon him hereafter to pay a like sum—and a little besides for honour's sake—when his turn comes to go out on *bijjār* for a marriage. For what says the proverb?—Feast on the sheep he gives you, but keep the bones on the shelf as a reminder. Nowadays they carry the custom to such a pitch that they go on asking for *bijjārī* even after a wedding's over. And if a man ever gave his friend *bijjārī* before, he now collects it like a debt. Why! he may even take it by force, should the other demur and plead his poverty: let him come anon, and he'll see what can be done. For if upbraiding is of no avail, he'll bide his time; but when he falls in with the other's flocks, he will lift a sheep or two, according to whatever he gave him before as *bijjār*. Howbeit in Sarāwān and Kalāt the custom has taken little root.

Bijjār by the chiefs.

107. This is a grand time for a chief in Jhalawān to lord it over his tribesmen, whether they are such as pay him revenue or not. On the betrothal of a son or a brother he sallies forth, he and his steward and his following and his serving-men, and journeying from

place to place, he searches out his tribesmen, and levies contributions according to his pleasure, by the right of his chiefship and the might of his chiefly following and power. Sheep and oxen he carries off, and even camels, if his tribesmen are weak. I could, an I would, tell a story how once on a time a Sōpak Sāssōlī did himself to death, so sorely beset was he, when the chief's son came harrying his people for *bijjār*.

Sending the good cheer to the bride's house.

108. Now when the youth's father has raked together all that is needed, he appoints a day on which it shall be sent to the maiden's house. And a procession sets forth with drums beating. The sheep are driven before, and behind are the camels laden with the good things. The camels and the stores are called *ārtī*, the flock of sheep is called *jalab*. And ever and anon they halt by the way and dance. So they come to the house. Now in Kalāt the young men have a merry custom: for they stealthily grab a handful of flour, and with roars of laughter they fling it at the men of the procession full in the face. Then the maiden's father takes the sheep and the stores, and hands them over to him we call *kāl-khwāh*, the one chosen for his thrift to act as master of the feast. And those that manned the procession are given food, and sent back whence they came.

The youth's mother gives the bride a quilt and a curtain.

109. That selfsame night the mother of the bridegroom, attended by a train of ladies, sets out for the bride's house, taking with her a long red cloth we call a *killa*, and a new bed-quilt. But when they reach the house, the door of the bride's chamber is shut and barred. For a while they stand without, begging that it may be opened unto them. And when at last the door is flung open, they enter in, singing the wedding hymn, "*Halō! hālō!*" There sits the bride, surrounded by three or four maidens of like age. *Jānī* they are called, for these bridesmaids are her bosom friends; but in some parts you may hear the Balōchī word *dast-guhār*, or "hand-sister." Henceforth they never

leave her side, lest the Jinns and evil spirits, catching her alone, throw their blight over her. And they hang the curtain up, and make the bride to sleep behind it on the quilt. And for food they give her *mālista*, a wheaten bread mixed with sugar and ghee. The groom is given the same bridal fare, for neither may henceforth eat meat until the wedding. It would breed strife between them, if one may believe the old wives.

Anointing the bride.

110. On the morrow there's the *duzzī hinnām*, when the henna is daubed on in the family circle. But on the following night it's done with pomp in the open assembly of the kith and kin and the neighbourhood. In Jhalawān the groom is anointed first, and after him the bride. But in Kalāt it's the other way about, and this is how they set to work. The bridegroom's mother issues forth from her house with the *ḍōmb* and a train of ladies. They bear the henna, and sing as they go. And when they are come to the maiden's house, lo! she is lying on the quilt that was brought her overnight, curtained off by the *killa*, with her maids of honour around her. The bridegroom's mother steps forth with the henna, to anoint her withal. But the bridesmaids gather round and thrust her back, and will not suffer her to come nigh. So she pushes and pushes, and at the last wins her way to the bride. But the bride herself now wards her off, with both arms outstretched against her. And the old dame has to coax her with a thousand sweet words and entreaties, before she suffers her to do her will. Then forth steps one who is a good wife and a good mother, and anoints her with the henna, beginning with the right hand and ending with the left foot; for this is always the order in the anointing with the henna. And the dish of henna is passed the round, and each lady takes thereof and smears it on her hands. But the younger among them privily take more than their share, and think it fine fun to daub it on the face of the mother and sisters of the groom. And they leave

the henna on the bride for a few hours, the bridesmaids never quitting her side, lest some enemy in jealous spite take ever so tiny a bit off hand or foot, and throw it in the fire. For that would mean a loveless wedlock with a vengeance. And when the time is come to take the henna off, they bear it away right carefully, and scatter it abroad in some running stream.

Anointing the groom.

111. Then the mother of the bride takes a dish of henna, and goes with her train to the bridegroom's house. But if she lives behind the veil, she does not enter the assembly of the men, but stands afar off, while the henna is taken on by the *ḍōmb* and the older ladies. There sits the groom on a cushion for his *takht*, or throne; for from this day forth until the wedding-night he is hailed as *bādshā*, or king. He sits with his face towards the north or the west—howbeit it is better it should be to the north. And by him stands his *shā-bālav*, the bodyguard that bears his sword. And at the coming of the henna one and all lift up their hands, praying that God may grant the young couple long life and lovingness. Then out steps some old worthy whom fortune has blessed above his fellows, and in the name of the Almighty he anoints the king with the henna on hands and feet. And the king, unlike his consort, makes no show of resistance, but takes the henna right gladly. Then follows the *shinikī*, or the showering of comfits over his head. And those around him vie with the children in the room in scrambling after them. Then the henna is passed round, and each in the assembly takes a little and smears it on his hands. But rude youth will not be robbed of its frolic, never resting until the groom's father and brothers have been well smeared on face and beard. And when all have taken of the henna, the dish is sent back to the bride's mother, with pieces of money piled on it, ten rupees or twenty maybe. But the henna is left on the king for the space of a few hours, and the *shā-bālav* and others keep watch and

ward, lest some mischief befall it. And when his hands and feet are washed clean, they gather up the henna with care and put it in running water. By-and-by platters arrive from the bride's house, laden with *mālista*, the bridal food. And the king eats thereof, with some of his company. And they send the platters back with five rupees or more as a gift to the mother of the bride.

Revelry in the two houses.

112. That night there's singing and dancing in both households. In the bride's house, to be sure, all men are barred from the revels. But in the house of the groom men and womenfolk alike sing and dance the whole night through. Howbeit they dance apart, the men in one ring, the womenfolk in a ring of their own. And at midnight they kill a sheep or two to be cooked by the grey of the morning. And at sunrise those who have attended on the groom through the night watches sit them down and eat.

The feasting.

113. That forenoon the father of the bride and the father of the groom call a few of the kith and kin each to his own house, that they may help at the slaughtering of the sheep and goats for the feasting. And when they are gathered together at the two houses, they lift up their hands in prayer, beseeching God's blessing on the young couple. Then they fall a-slaughtering, and the number of beasts that are slaughtered must be even, not odd. So they take their leave, but only to return with many others that selfsame afternoon for the feast. And the revelry begins anew. In the bride's house the men depart once the feasting is over, while the ladies cease not from dance and song till the coming of the groom. But in the house of the groom both the men and the womenfolk hold their revels till the setting of the sun, when the groom shall don his bridal apparel and wend his way in state to the maiden's house.

It is sometimes

114. Now if the two fathers are near neighbours and close friends withal, they may choose to club together

done jointly.

and make one feast of it, to the end that the cost may be cut down. In such case the father of the groom would himself bring the *ārtī*, he and his kinsfolk and his friends and his neighbours. And they would come along singing, stopping once or twice on the road for a dance. And when they arrived at the bride's dwelling, there would be a big dance, the ladies of both parties joining in, and all the men, save only the next-of-kin to the bride. And a house would be cleared for the groom and his father and his following. And on the morrow all the kith and kin and friends of both houses would be bidden to the feast. And he who went forth to call them in would say to each and every one of them: "The master of the house and the father of the groom together entreat your presence at the feast." By this they would know that the feast was the feast of both houses.

Procedure when the two houses are far apart.

115. But if the two houses are some marches apart, the groom's father will send the *ārtī* on ahead, letting them know on what day he will himself follow with his company. Then must he set to work; for the *hinnām* has to be duly performed, and there's the feasting of his friends and kin, and the dancing and all. And when the time comes, he sets out with his company of riders. And ever and anon they halt by the roadside, and dance for the space of an hour or so. And on the place where they dance, they set a circle of stones as a memorial thereof. Such *chāp-jahī*, or dancing-grounds, you may see along any road in Jhalawān. So they reach the house that has been set in readiness for them. And here a hearty welcome awaits them, and a jocund dance and a goodly feast for one and all. And the father of the bride makes no long tarrying, for he too has performed the *hinnām* betimes. So there's nothing to hinder them from celebrating the marriage the very night after the groom arrives.

Arraying the bride.

116. At the hour of afternoon prayer a Lōṛī beats the drum to the *shādmānī* measure. By this all the world knows that the time has come to deck the bride out for

the bridal. So they take the bride apart, and wash her and bathe her. Then they bring her into an apartment where all the ladies of rank are assembled, and seat her behind the *killa*. And the *ḍōmb* comes bustling along and tires her hair. Two hours at least does she spend over the tiring of the bride's hair, and a rupee is the wage for her task. But the donning of the bridal array is not yet. For when it is nigh to the going down of the sun, the Lōṛī without again beats the *shādmānī* on his drum, and at the sound some lady of honour (not a widow, you may be sure) is called upon to deck the bride for the bridal. Forth she steps, but she has to entreat the bride and her ladies-in-waiting ever so long and prettily, before she is suffered to draw nigh, and can coax her to don the shirt and the head-dress and the trousers. If the bridal apparel is red, so much the better. And the shirt will surely be red, whatever the rest may be. Black, as you may guess, is never worn by a bride. And the skirts of her shirt are unhemmed, and unhemmed they must remain till the third day of the wedding. For a hemmed skirt would surely hem the way of the groom.

Dressing the groom.

117. And when this task is over, the *ḍōmb* sets forth with the womenfolk of the bride's kindred, bearing the groom's apparel and a dish full of *mēṭ*, the washing clay, mingled with fine oil and sweet perfumes. On they march to the assembly of the men, singing "*Halō ! hālō !*" while the drum beats out the wedding march right bravely. Now at the sound of the drum, the groom arises with his *shā-bālav* and a whole host of the kin. And they take him without, and seat him on a flat stone or some wooden plank. But his *shā-bālav* stands before him with a drawn sword, holding it upright with the back turned to the groom, and the sharp edge fronting the sky. And some worthy who has gotten him many children by a loving wife is set to wash the groom's head. So he takes the dish of *mēṭ* from the hands of the *ḍōmb*, and places it before the groom. Uttering "*Bis-*

milla !" he takes a little from the dish, and turns it thrice round the groom's head, and then flings it towards the west. Four times does he act in this wise, for the clay must be flung to all four quarters of the earth. Then he falls a-washing the long locks of the groom, for it's seldom they suffer a groom to wash his own head. And when his hair is washed, each of the kindred lends a hand and rubs his body and washes it clean. And when he is thoroughly cleansed, the bride's mother brings forward his apparel. First is he made to don his shirt and then his trousers. And some folk make a fuss that his trousers should be worn inside out; for this, they say, will bring to naught any magic or sorcery that else might stay him from playing a man's part, when he first goes in unto his bride. Then the groom bows his head, and a Sayyad or some other gentleman who is honoured among them folds the turban about his temples. Next he dons his waistcoat and his *lungī*, or scarf. And his shoes are brought and placed before him. Now in some parts—and they are not the wildest parts either—it's the custom to pour a little millet into each shoe; and he puts them on, millet and all. For this will bring him both wealth and children. And never does he doff his shoes, however rich the carpet on which he treads, until he is left alone with his bride. Now when he has donned all his fine array, they give turbans or robes of honour to the others of the party; nor is the Lōṛī forgotten. And forth they lead the groom, and seat him on his cushion. There he sits on his *takht*, or throne, for is he not their *bādshā*, or king, for the nonce?

Racing and shooting.

118. But among the well-to-do there's a pause for sport. The king is mounted on a charger, and he and his following sally forth to the racing-place. And the horsemen are set to ride a race, and he who comes in first is given a piece of money or a sheep or a cloth of silk. Then those that can shoot a good shot step forth for a match. And among the ruder folk of Jhalawān it's

a goat that is set up as a mark, poor creature! And he who brings it down carries it off for his prize. Elsewhere they are content with a stone for a target, and the prize for the master marksman is a sheep.

Shinikī and sargasht.

119. And when the fun is over, they bring the *bādshā* back and seat him on his throne, his bodyguard standing before him. Each of the kin and well-wishers takes a few comfits and flings them over his head. But hill folk and nomad makes shift with grains of wheat and *juārī* for their *shinikī*, for comfits they have none. Then the company comes forward man by man, and each in turn hands a few annas or a rupee or two or more to some reverend gentleman that takes his stand before the king. And he takes the coin, and twirling it round the head of the king, he calls aloud: "It is a rupee—or whatever may be the sum—that Mr. So-and-So has granted." Nor does this *sargasht*, or passing round the head, come to a close until each of the company has stepped up with his offering.

The groom finishes his toilet.

120. Then the female *ḍōmb* comes forward with a mirror and oil and antimony and *muzvāk*, or bits of walnut bark, all on a dish, and sets it before the king. With the oil the bridegroom dresses his locks and his beard. With the antimony he paints his eyes, and his lips he reddens with the *muzvāk*. And he peers into the mirror the while, to see that all is in goodly order. Then the dish is handed round the room. And each of the company takes a little oil and anoints his locks and beard. Now when they have oiled themselves to their liking, all save the nearest kin and dearest friends depart to their homes. The bridegroom sits on in silence. But around him there's a merry uproar of jest and song and pleasant talk. And though the groom himself sits silent, his boon companions make free enough with their tongues: he'd better not sit so calm and glum by-and-by, or the night would end in nothingness, and things would come to a pretty pass; so mind he show his true mettle, and prove his manhood right valiantly before the morning.

Finishing the bride's toilet.

121. All this time there's a deal of fuss going on in the bride's chamber. The *ḍōmb* is busy painting the bride's forehead with divers colours; red and green and yellow will she use, but never black. From this time forth until she is handed over to her groom, the bride may not open her eyes, or utter a word, but must sit mute, and hold a handkerchief to her eyes. Her ladies-in-waiting sit around her, doing her service. And at her side sits some old dame, staying her with wise words of comfort. And whenever she can get in her say unheard and unseen, she whispers in her ear how she should bear herself by-and-by. But as soon as they begin to deck the bride with her ornaments, the old dame speaks out boldly, and says aloud that this jewel or that is the gift of the father or the groom. And the saying goes among the women, that whichever of the bridal couple first puts on a golden ring or other jewel on the wedding day, shall excel the other in beauty.

Worshipping the bride's *ṭik*.

122. Now when the bride's adornment is over, they take and seat her in lonely state on a big cushion. And *shinikī* and *sargasht* are performed, even as they were performed over the bridegroom in the assembly of the men. Then all the ladies who have daughters of their own yet unmarried, come forward and do worship to the *ṭik*, or bridal markings, on the bride's forehead. Thus do they pray: "Oh, God! forasmuch as we have beheld the *ṭik* of this Thy favoured servant, even so in Thy grace grant unto us that we may yet live to behold the marriage marks of our daughters." For this they account a moment lucky above all others, and they believe that whatsoever they ask of God at this hour will verily be vouchsafed to them.

Two witnesses seek access to the bride.

123. At about ten o'clock that night the groom comes along with his procession, bringing with him the mulla to celebrate the marriage. And two worthies are chosen out of the company, to the end that they may

serve as *gwāh*, or witnesses, at the wedding. They are sent to the women's apartment to learn whom the bride appoints as her *nikānā bāva*, or marriage-father. At their coming the door is shut in their face. And it's often a plaguey long business before they are let in and can say their say. In Nichāra they stand and knock and knock, but never a soul moves to open the door. "Begone!" they tell them, "begone! and pound *narōmb*!"* Now *narōmb* is a plant that grows in the colder parts of the country, and tanning's all that it's good for. With this dry answer they must rest content, for it's as much as they'll get. So they wend their way back to the assembly of the men, and seek to hide their shame unseen in a corner. But the young fellows are at them at once. "What's the news, my masters?" they cry. "What's the news?" repeat the two, stammering and stuttering. "Why! all they said was that we should be off, and pound *narōmb!*" And this is hailed with peals of laughter, and joke chases joke all round the room. But by-and-by the jollity flags, and the witnesses must be off to try their luck once more. And they stand at the door of the women's apartment and knock and knock, cursing the whole tribe of women softly to themselves. "Begone!" the proud mother calls out from within, "begone! the hide is not yet tanned, nor will be till two more years are out." So back they go and slink into the assembly of the men, hoping in vain to escape the fire of questions. There they sit amid roars of ribald laughter, the butt of every joker. But the men soon have enough of it, and pack the witnesses off yet a third time. And they go with heavy heart and faltering steps, and stand at the door of the women's apartment, and knock and knock and knock. And they have to put up with a hundred excuses from the mother, and a deal of mockery from

* *Ephedra pachyclada.*

the women, and must beg ever so long and piteously, before they are suffered to come within.

The bride nominates her *nikānā bāva*, or wedding-father.

124. Then they stand close up to the *killa*, or curtain, which screens off the bride, and ask her to recite the *kalima*, the confession of the faith. This she does, but in a whisper so soft they can scarce hear a word. So they bid her speak up. And yet again she recites the holy words. But the witnesses feign not to have heard her, and she has to recite the *kalima* yet a third time, and in a loud and hearty voice. Now comes their question: "Mother," they ask, "whom do you appoint to be your marriage-father?" And she makes answer: "Such and such a one do I appoint to be my marriage-father." And the name she utters is never the name of her real father, but the name of some old gentleman.

Different customs.

125. Well, this is how things are done in Nichāra and elsewhere. Nevertheless customs vary. Among the Mēngal and others, though the witnesses have much the same trouble, and have to come thrice to the door before they can approach the bride, the mother doesn't talk in parables and prate of *narōmb*, but tells them roundly that the maiden is still too young to marry: they had better come again in a few years' time. In Kalāt it's a simple affair. There the witnesses come once only, are let into the room without further ado, put their questions, hear what the bride has to say, go off with the answer, and it's all over and done with.

The witnesses give their evidence.

126. Now when the witnesses have got what they want, they lose no further time, but hurry back to the assembly of the men. No more do they slink off and seek to hide their face in a corner, but stand as bold as brass before the mulla. And when they have made obeisance before him, he calls upon them to give their evidence one by one. And notwithstanding they may know no Persian, it's in that tongue that they reply. Yet, seeing that the mulla was at pains to drill them beforehand in what they must say, it's

not so surprising after all. So up speaks the first and delivers him of this set speech: "I am verily a witness, and it's all for the glory of God that I hereby testify that such and such a maiden, the issue of such and such a lady, who has no other daughter of that name, has appointed such and such a man to be her marriage-father." Now you will note that though the maiden and her mother are duly named in this speech, there's never a word about her real father. Indeed in olden days it would have been thought unseemly if he did not absent himself a day or two before the wedding, leaving the house to his wife's brother or a son. Nowadays things are so lax, it doesn't matter much whether he stays or goes. But he should at least be spared the rude jests of the young men. Well, the first witness says his say, and passes on, and the second takes his place. He gives his testimony in the selfsame words, and he too passes on.

The fixing of the *mahr*, or dower.

127. Then he who has thus been appointed the marriage-father, steps forward and seats himself over against the mulla. And the mulla calls upon him and says: "Well, sir, let us now hear what *mahr*, or dower, you would have settled on your daughter." "One lak of golden mohurs, and not a penny less!" is the proud reply. So the mulla turns to the groom, who is seated at his side, and asks whether he will truly take the maiden and dower her in this wise. But the groom will not hear of it: the sum is enormous, he had never heard the like; the matter would have to be thrashed out anew; there was no doubt about that. And some worthy—glib and persuasive of tongue—comes forward and seats him at his side, to take up the cudgels on his behalf. Right manfully does he plead his cause, and wrangle with the marriage-father: something he would surely abate in the name of God? So in the name of God the marriage-father abates one-half of the huge sum he stood out for at the first. Then the spokes-

mân returns to the charge: "Now that you've abated half in the name of the Almighty, what, pray, will you abate in the name of our Prophet—aye! and in the name of all the other prophets? And please to remember that they are one hundred and twenty-four thousand in number." So the marriage-father abates yet more of the dower, and cuts it down little by little, until it stands at the sum that is current among them. But the haggling and the wrangling may go on for hours; yet folk of sense and courtesy will soon come to terms in the matter.

The rates for *mahr*.

128. Now the customary rate for dower is the rate that has been current from of old in the bride's family. Thus if the father of the bride settled twenty rupees on her mother, likely enough he will claim the same for his daughter, no more, no less. Yet at times they go by the rate that may have been granted to her married sisters if this was different; and now and then they take their stand according to the custom in the family of the groom. In olden days folk took pride in keeping to the ancient family dower, but in these latter days customs are so higgledy-piggledy, there's no knowing what they are. However here are some of the rates: among the Ahmadzei a thousand gold mohurs; among the Mullāzei, or Akhundzei, four hundred; among the Khān's courtiers, or Khānzād as they are called, twenty; among the alien Dēhwār of Kalāt, five to fifteen; while workaday Brāhūīs give ten to twenty rupees of silver in dower.

Of *mahr* in general.

129. Men of rank sometimes bestow a piece of land on their brides. Indeed you may come across many a curious dower custom up and down the country. But it's none too easy to find one's way about them, for dower as a rule is a mere promise after all. So long as his wife's alive, a man need fear little from her on this score. Nay, he may soon wheedle her into making the dower over to him again, in return for a one-fourth

share in his hearth. Then, whatsoever is cooked on his hearth in the name of God, one-fourth thereof may she claim before God. And seldom do her issue lodge a claim against their father at her death. To be sure, if she die without issue, there are all the makings of a very pretty quarrel at *shariat*, or religious law. But the heirs may look to the husband to put up a mighty shrewd fight for it, before they wring a penny of the dower out of him.

The marriage service.

130. Well, once the *mahr* is settled, the mulla turns to the groom, and thrice asks him in Persian whether he verily and indeed accepts such and such a maiden, the issue of such and such a lady, who has no other daughter of that name, to be his true and lawful wife for such and such a dower. And thrice the groom must make answer in Persian: "I do." Then the mulla, speaking in the Arabic tongue, reads the *nikā*, or marriage service, and lifts up his hands in prayer for the welfare of the young couple, the whole assembly likewise lifting up their hands and praying with him. Then congratulations are showered on the bridegroom and his father. And after dates and sweetmeats have been distributed amongst them, all take their leave, save only an old gentleman and one or two of the near kin, who wait on the groom. But before they depart, those who would fain marry but have not the wherewithal, bow themselves before the king and crave of him a boon, saying, "Oh King! pray unto God for my early marriage." And he lays his hand on their shoulders, and prays for the fulfilment of their desire. For he is king that night, and surely to the prayers of a king God will not turn a deaf ear.

Buffoonery at the wedding.

131. But it's not the solemn ceremony you may think it. For the young bloods are ever on the watch to catch the mulla tripping, and they plague him and tease him and chaff him as he reads the service. I could tell you many a merry tale about a rustic wedding. Did you ever hear the answer of the simple fellow, when the

mulla put the question whether he verily and indeed accepted the maiden to be his true and lawful wife? "Well! my old father accepted her all right!" he stuttered, so full had his father been of the young lady's charms. But this is nothing to the lubberly bumpkin who blurted out: "Accept her, forsooth? Why! I'm like a mad dog after her!"

The bridal couple drink the *shīr-shakkal*.

132. Now when the *nikā* is over, and the guests have departed, one or two of the near kin lead the groom to the bride's dwelling. To the door of the house they escort him, and there they leave him, for he must go forward alone, with only one old gentleman of the kin—a man of wealth and many children—to bear him company. But the door of the bride's apartment is barred against him by the mother and married sisters of the bride. The bridesmaids, you must know, quitted the bride before his coming, for their service is at an end. But the groom stands without and knocks; for pity's sake they should let him in, and bounteously he'd repay each and all for the kindness. So the door is opened at last, and in he enters, and the old gentleman enters with him. And the mother and her daughters rise up and bid him welcome, heaping blessings on him. But the bride remains perched on her throne. So he seats himself at the right hand of his bride; yet mounted on the throne itself he still keeps on his shoes. And he must listen with good grace, while the ladies chaff him merrily about what the night will bring forth. Soon a cup of milk sweetened with sugar—*shīr-shakkal* we call it—is brought in. The bride it is who first puts cup to lip, and sips; then the cup is handed to the groom, and he in turn takes a few sips, and hands it back to his bride. She sips it yet a second time, and hands it again to the groom; and after he has sipped it once more, he hands the cup to the old lady. But she passes it on to one of the others to drink dry. For it would never do for any of the *shīr-shakkal* to be thrown away.

133. Then a Korān is brought in and placed, with the first page open, before the groom and his bride. Now at last does the bride open her eyes, for hitherto she has kept them tight shut with the kerchief. First she looks at the Holy Writ, and so plucks up heart to peep at her groom. Then they set a big mirror before them, and the bride is coaxed to lay her veil aside and gaze at herself and her groom mirrored in the glass. As for the groom, it's little coaxing he needs, I warrant, for he has longed and longed for this sight many's the weary day. Then the old worthy of the kin lays hands on their heads, and thrice knocks them together, head against head. This is what we mean by *ḍūk tining*. With that all depart their several ways. And bride and groom are left alone at last. And first as ever is, the groom stands on a corner of the bride's head-dress, his shoes still on his feet, and offers up a prayer of thanksgiving to the Almighty. *Ḍūk tining.*

134. But without sit the two mothers with a few old ladies of the kindred, keeping watch and ward to the end that they may be as witnesses hereafter. They are all on the alert for the call that shall summon them within. And they wait and wait, and still maybe there is no call. And the bride's mother twits the groom's mother touching the sluggishness of her son: by her troth! his feebleness is passing strange. God forbid it be nothing worse! But the other is not at a loss for the reason: there must be magic abroad; it could not be else; she'll be bound some knave has been at his scurvy tricks and bewitched the poor fellow, or he would have played the man ages before this, they may take her word for it. And sure enough, the groom may presently call out in distress to his mother, to hurry to the priest for some holy water to quicken his flagging spirits. Off bustles the old dame post-haste, and the priest takes some water, breathes a potent charm over it, and she's back with it as fast as her legs can carry her. And let's hope the charm The bridal night.

will work this night or the next. For the longer the delay, the greater the disgrace to the groom.

The tokens of virginity.

135. And the moment it's all over, he calls the old ladies in. They don't stand on the order of their coming, I'll be bound, but hasten in and eagerly scan the bridal apparel for the tokens of virginity. And if the stains are all she could wish, great is the exaltation of the mother of the bride. Aloft she holds the cloth in triumph, and displays it with pride to each lady in turn, saying: "Look on this, my sister—look on this! and rejoice with me. You know right well how my days were spent, watching over this my dear child. Rest I had not, neither by night nor yet by day, for truly the times are out of joint. But now, praise be to God, who has not suffered my labour to be in vain. And you, madam," she adds, turning to the mother of the groom, "I congratulate ten hundred times, for your son's bride is all, thank God, that a bride should be. And so I leave her to your keeping." Nor do the ladies stint their congratulations. And the cloth is treasured up by the mother, for it is her glory.

Ante-nuptial loss of the maiden-head.

136. Now it's a mighty ticklish matter to speak touching the tokens of virginity. Yet say something I must, for what's to be done, say you, if there be none at all? Aye! if there were none at all, it would be a grisly business for the bride: many a one has been slain on her bridal bed in the past, and all because there were no tokens of virginity to display. Now a maiden, so old wives have told me, may lose her maidenhead in more ways than one. For the mischief may be done, if a girl is left free to romp and skip and jump and run wild. And it's madness to let her carry heavy loads or strain at heavy weights. And one wise old midwife—never have I met a wiser—tells me that she has known many a maiden of high birth owe the loss of her maidenhead to soap. No matter, says she, whether she swallows a bit of the soap or washes her private parts withal, the mischief is done.

Let her but do the one or the other, and the tender fabric's marred. Yet even though one guard a maiden ever so carefully from soap and strains and romps, the case may be just about as parlous, if twenty years and more go by before she wed. For at her ripe years the tokens of virginity may be nothing but a few pale drops after all, very unlike the rich red flow of a younger maiden. And alas! in these latter days, when girls are given freedom such as their grandmothers never dreamt of, the maidenhead may be gone before the bridal past recall—only the shameless wench and her lover know when and where.

How concealed.

137. So it's for the mother to make sure before the wedding night how matters stand. And 'tis strange if she and some old midwife cannot put things to rights between the two of them. They've many a trick to befool the groom—more I wager than ever I heard of. Thus they'll bid the bride baffle him all she can, and tie knots in the string of her *shalvār*, when he seeks to make his way to her. So there's a mighty fine tussle between them, what with the one striving to play the man, lest he be mocked on the morrow by his comrades, and the other struggling and pushing and kicking and straining to escape his embraces. Small wonder, then, if blood is spilt in the scuffle. Nor will the groom think there's aught amiss in such maidenly coyness. And maybe there is naught amiss after all; for a bride is often taught to act in this wise, nor suffer the groom to have his will, until he promise her fine clothes or some jewel of price. But if the mother fears her daughter is so old, that the tokens of virginity will be dim and scant, she sets the wedding on a day that the monthly course is due. And when the faint tokens of virginity mingle with the flow of uncleanness, small blame to the poor groom if he is well content. But should the womenfolk see through the mother's fraud, she's quick to turn the blame on to the groom with a chuckle: could he not bide his time, the lusty rogue? but must needs break through the Holy

Law to get at his bride? But if the worst has come to the worst, and some thief has stolen away that which the bridegroom alone should enjoy, the mother and the mid-wife will put their heads together, and give the bride some drugs that womenfolk wot of. And the drugs will make the privy parts shrink together, so that all is as before. And enough blood will be spilt at the bridal to satisfy the groom and to boot. In such wise are men befooled by their women.

Dēm-dīdārī.

138. The groom's father comes betimes on the morrow, for he would fain congratulate his son. But the bride will not suffer him to have so much as a glimpse of her face, until he has given her some ornament or other goodly gift. In like fashion the uncles and brothers and cousins of the groom must come with a gift, if they come for *dēm-dīdārī*, or the seeing of the face. Yet the gift of one of these is less costly than the gift of the father, and a dish of sweetmeats and a head-dress will suffice.

Getting back some of the *lab* and *shīr-pailī*.

139. But now is the hour for the bridegroom to taste the sweets of revenge for all the bride-price and the milk-share that the father and mother of his bride have wrung from him. As soon as he rises in the morning, he tells the old lady roundly that he will stay not another moment under their roof, but will be off with his bride then and there. And the more she entreats him to stay, the more he hardens his heart, upbraiding her for their greed. 'Twould be a lasting disgrace, says she, were they not to abide at least three full days in their house. More shame to them, he retorts, for extorting all that *lab* and *shīr-pailī* out of him. So off she goes and chides the master of the house, and entreats him to assuage the ruffled bridegroom. Now some fathers are so churlish, they'll let a young couple go, and lift never a finger to stay them. But where will you find a mother so unmotherly as not to give back some of her milk-share, if this will make the bridegroom yield? And most fathers will seek to make peace by the surrender of some portion

of the *lab*—land or arms or money or whatever it be. Well, the bridegroom stays on for that day, but on the morrow he's at it again: not another moment will he stay under their roof. So it goes on, day after day, and the bride-price and the milk-share dwindle away little by little. For it is accounted a shameful thing if the bridal couple stay not full three days under the bride's roof. This is the common custom in Jhalawān, as elsewhere. But among the Zarakzei and other great families of Jhalawān it's a point of honour for the bride's father to keep his daughter and her groom for three months or even a year under his roof.

Three days are spent in the bridal house.

140. So it's at least three days they are pent up in the house of the bridal after the marriage. Not that they are left alone the whole day long. For the friends and the kinsfolk come and sit with them a few hours each morning. Eagerly the young men greet the groom, saying: "Are you a lion or a jackal?" Not a word does he answer in his pride, but carelessly spreads out his skirt, that they may see the tokens of virginity wherewith he took pains to stain it. And while the men sit with the groom, the ladies bear the bride company. And they sing and they joke, while she looks on with a calm smile on her face. And after the company have supped, they leave the couple alone once more. But in the afternoon some ladies come again to cheer the bride. Now during these three days when the womenfolk come a-visiting, they bring with them a few uncrushed grains of wheat. These they fling over the bride and her groom, and they make the couple crush the grain and throw them down again. This is called *pāṭō*. And the womenfolk gather the broken grains and treasure them up, for they look upon them as a sovereign cure against the fever that attacks a man every three days.

The *ḍōmbs* collect their share.

141. Early on the morning of the third day after the wedding the *ḍōmb* sallies forth with his wife. And they beat the drum and play on the *surnā*, and sing the *shād-*

mānī rhyme. And hearing the beat of the drum, all the kin and the neighbours come flocking out of doors, and the women bring with them a dish of wheat and flour. And the dishes they place on a sheet that the *ḍōmb* spreads out before him. And when all have given their offering, he carries off sheet and dishes and all, to his great content. For this is his share, this *allā-ḍēr*, God's heap, as we call it.

Display of the gifts on the fourth day.

142. And on the fourth day the groom makes ready to depart with his bride to his own home. But before they are suffered to go, the bride's mother calls the ladies of the kindred together, and brings out all the ornaments and apparel and carpets and vessels and other pretty things for the household that she and her husband have bestowed on the bride. Each thing must be viewed in turn, and one by one they must all admire it. And the mother's heart swells with pride, as she looks first to this lady and then to that, pricking up her ears to hear what they whisper the one to the other about the gift and the master and the lady of the house. The word for these gifts is *vaḍḍam*. But there's yet another thing that must be viewed and admired withal—the cloth with the tokens of virginity. And at the sight thereof the mother's pride is greater than ever.

The home-coming.

143. Now if they are folk of means, they take the bride to her new home mounted on a camel in a *kajāva*, or litter, while the bridegroom rides along astride a horse. Otherwise they must needs trudge along as best they may afoot. And as soon as they reach the dwelling, a sheep is slaughtered on the threshold, and the bride is made to step on the blood that is sprinkled, in such wise that one of the heels of her shoe is marked therewith. A little of the blood is caught in a cup, and a bunch of green grass is dropped therein, and the mother of the groom stains the bride's forehead with the blood as she steps over the threshold. And the cup is taken to a running stream, and the green grass and the

blood are then flung out; or if there be no running stream hard by, they pour the blood underneath a green tree, and there they leave the green grass. But nowadays, among fine folk who have learnt more of the ways of the true Faith, the bride's forehead is not stained with the blood. The groom's mother hands her a cup of milk with a bunch of green grass in it, and the bride dips her little finger in the milk, and the milk and the green grass are then thrown into a stream or flung under a green tree. As for the groom, he doesn't concern himself with the blood at all—nay, he leaves the bride at the threshold. So the bride enters her new abode with the womenfolk, and the whole day is passed in singing in honour of the home-coming.

The groom visits a shrine.

144. But before the bridegroom may enter into the house, he must visit the shrine of some saint. There he does worship, and leaving sweetmeats behind for the attendants of the shrine, he wends his way back home. But first he goes to the bride's old house, if it's in the same village as his, with his *shā-bālav* in his train, and her father gives him a dish of sweetmeats and a brave kerchief. And thanking him prettily, he sets off again, and goes to the house of some other near kin, and there too a kerchief and a dish of sweets await him. So he goes from house to house among the kindred and friends, and it is with a fine store of sweets and kerchiefs and other knick-knacks that he reaches his home that day. And the *shā-bālav* is given his share of the sweetmeats and a kerchief and something into the bargain, and is then quit of his service. And the day is wound up with a feast to the near kin.

Pai-vāzī, the formal visit to the bride's old home.

145. Now once the bride has departed to her new home, she may not come under her father's roof, until she and her groom have been bidden there to a feast. 'Tis a goodly feast that is furnished in their honour. Thereto are summoned the womenfolk of the near kin, aye, and many a kinsman more also. And after the

feast the bridal couple return to their own home laden with gifts. From that day henceforth may the young wife go to her old home whenever she lists, for this is the ceremony of *pai-vāzī*, the loosening of the feet.

Wedding among nomads.

146. Now a wedding goes forward somewhat otherwise among nomads who have no fixed abode but live in a *gidān*, or tent of goats' hair. The maiden's folk pitch a *gidān* all by itself for the groom and his bride a goodly step from the encampment. In the middle of the *gidān* they hang up a *killa*, to curtain the one half off from the other. When the sun has set and all is dark, they take the bride thither, and leave her in the *gidān*, screened off with her bridesmaids behind the curtain. And after they have settled the *mahr* and the rest of it, they bring the groom to the *gidān*. And if the night be cold, they come right in. And though the groom cannot see the bride for the curtain, they are so close they can hear all that goes on. So the mulla reads the *nikā*, and he and his company depart. Not that the mulla leaves the encampment; he remains a guest there for the night.

The bridal night among the nomads.

147. And finding himself alone, the groom makes no long tarrying, I reckon, but lifts up the curtain to go in unto his bride. But the bridesmaids block the way, and will not let him in until he has given each a gift—a sheep or a piece of money or a head-dress. And as soon as he wins his way to her, he takes hold of the bride by the wrist and draws her towards him. Forthwith the bridesmaids quit the bride and go quietly to their own homes, for their watch is over. And the groom and the bride seat them on a cushion. And the bride's mother brings in the *shīr-shakkal*, and they take a few sips of the milk, drinking from the selfsame cup. Whatever is left over is given to the *ḍōmb* or some handmaid to drink off. So groom and bride are left alone in the tent. But the old dames wait without listening for the call. And when at last they go in, their

first thought is for the tokens of virginity on the bride's garments. And they stick the cloth up aloft to the top of the *gidān* or other place where it will catch the eye of any women who come to visit the bride. Three full days is it kept in the *gidān*, and when it is taken down, it is treasured up as a cherished relic for years. But the groom on his part takes pains to stain the skirt of his shirt or the end of his turban with the tokens of virginity. And when the kindred and the friends come to congratulate him on the morrow, he sits him down spreading the garment before him, that all the world may see the stain. Three whole days must the couple abide in the lonely little *gidān*. And on the fourth day the bridegroom sallies out to some shrine, and goes among his friends and kin in the encampment, and gathers presents as he goes. And the womenfolk take the bride to her new home. And at the entrance of her husband's *gidān* a sheep is slaughtered, and the bride is stained with the warm blood on heel and forehead. But if the husband's encampment be afar off, they may delay the home-coming a few days longer. So the bride is taken by the women to the *gidān* of her father. But before she may enter therein, a sheep is slain at the entrance, and drops of blood are sprinkled on her forehead. Howbeit the heel of her shoe is not stained. Yet is it stained, and her forehead also is stained yet again, when she is taken at the last to her new home.

Wedded life.

148. And let's hope the young couple will live happily ever after. But seeing that neither had a say in the matter, and that the one may never have clapped eyes on the other before the bridal, it's a mighty chancy business after all. Not but what a marriage between strangers is not often enough the happiest of the lot; and as it costs more than a marriage among the kin, maybe it's only as it should be. For a young girl, torn from her kindred, will surely strive to win her husband's

love. And with husband on her side, whom has she to fear? But if he is against her, her life will become a burden. For all his folk will round on her, and his women will sneer and pull faces at her, as only women can. So if she's wise, a girl that is parted from her kin will be a dutiful wife for her own sake, I warrant. Howbeit a girl married to a kinsman will start her wedded life loving her husband with a twofold love. She will love him for that he is her husband, and she will love him for that he is of her kin. Yet the temptation may be all the greater to thwart him ever and anon and vex him with disobedience, for the rogue fancies she can always look to her own people to back her, if the worst comes to the worst.

Incompatibility of temper one cause of polygamy.

149. But when married folk fall out, be they kin or be they strangers, 'tis a sorry business at best. And if the husband does not find favour in the wife's eyes, she will turn shrewish, take my word for it. But if the wife fails to win the husband's heart, I'll be bound his heart will soon go a-roaming. Surely it's the same the wide world over. But those of the true Faith have their cure to hand. What says the old saw? Don't take stick to your wife, take another wife to beat her withal.

Ambition and barrenness other causes.

150. To be sure, it's not only distaste for a wife that drives men to try their luck again. For one may seek to better his estate by marrying into a high family. And another may covet the treasure that the only daughter of rich parents may bring him. And a third may have no children by his wife, or nothing but a daughter or two; and a daughter, after all, is little more than a gift to your neighbour. So small blame to him if he takes another to bed and board. For who would wish to die and leave no son behind him?

Old age perhaps the chief cause.

151. Yet even though a wife be the mother of a swarm of strapping sons, she stands in greater jeopardy of a rival every hour. For this is how the lasses put

it, when they gossip among themselves: Bear your lord a couple of sons, and he'll love you as a sister; bear him four, and he'll like you as a mother; but bear him five—and he'll call you granny, and wed some wench to keep him company. And here's a Dēhwārī song the serving-woman loves to sing, when the womenfolk are gathered together and sit chattering. And great is the delight of the maidens when they hear it, and sour the looks of the old. For it hits the mark shrewdly:

Thirty years old—
A wife's a scold.
Best rid of her life,
To be rid of her strife.

For ten years more,
She's worse than before.
No graveyard will hold her,
Though hell takes 'em older!

Ten more? Lackaday,
There's the devil to pay!
For she'll lead by the nose
E'en the devil, God knows!

152. Yes, marriage is a sorry gamble at the best of times. For good wives don't grow on bushes, as far as I know. And there's truth and wit to boot in the proverb wherewith the court jester put off one of the rulers of the olden time, when he urged him to take a wife to his widowed bed. "Wives," quoth he, "there be four: there's Bedfellow, Muckheap, Gadabout, and Queen-o'-women. The more's the pity that the last is one in a hundred. So a single life's the life for me—thank you all the same," he added ever so prettily. And if the old Khān didn't feel the point of the jest, I don't know who would. For His Highness had thirty wives and five times thirty concubines. And I guess there were precious few Queens-o'-women in the whole bunch. The four wives of the proverb.

153. Well, these are the four. Now Bedfellow isn't the true name of the first, for what *Ṭāng-ṭartīn* really Their different characters.

means, I should blush to tell. You must just guess for yourself. Once out of bed, she's no use at all. Little does she care for her husband; for her household she cares still less. As for Muckheap, she doesn't care for her household a whit. The whole place may be topsy-turvy for all she worries about it. Where a thing falls, there let it lie, is her motto. But Gadabout's as different as different can be. She's always on the fidget. Never was there a body so busy at doing nothing. She bustles from room to room, as merry as a cricket, and just about as helpful. And if she can find some one to chat with, Lord! how her voice will clack! All about nothing, I'll be bound. But by-and-by she will sit her down to her needlework. Yet she hasn't threaded her needle, before she's up and out of doors. Some one, I suppose, has beaten a drum in the village; or it may only be neighbour's wife passing the house. But as for Queen-o'-women, who can praise her enough? Let the man who has her to wife, thank his Maker for her daily.

Struggle for supremacy among the *apōk*, or rivals.

154. But the best of wives is like to turn shrewish, when an *apōk*, or rival, comes into the house. The waters of jealousy are exceeding bitter, and she drinks them to the dregs. For where's the man that can hold the balance true betwixt his wives? Sooner or later the one will surely worm her way into his heart to the other's undoing. And if the one is young and blooming and the other old and shrivelled, it needs no wizard to tell which will be which, I'm thinking. Not that a wife will surrender her place in bed and house without a struggle. She tries all her wiles, that once were so winning. But if she finds that their power is fled, in despair she turns to amulets and charms, poor, silly thing. And a deal of money she wastes over their getting. But her rival forestalls amulet with amulet, and charm she forestalls with charm. So they fight it out to the end. And then—woe to the vanquished!

Triumph

155. For the *rūdār*, or wife in favour, will lord it

despitefully over the *bērū*, or wife in disgrace. Yet if the vanquished has sons to comfort her, she will arm herself about with pride, and bear herself ever so high and mighty to her husband. But her pride will often be sorely wounded. For should a guest come along to the encampment, he will first find out on the quiet which tent is the tent of the favoured wife. For he knows better than to put up in the tent of the wife in disgrace, with cold water and dry bread for his fare. And this is why the fate of a vanquished wife is better in the house of a villager than in the tent of a nomad. But it's worst of all in the house of a chief, for here jealousy has ample scope and to spare. and humiliation.

156. Small wonder that folk will not marry their daughter to a man who has one of their kinswomen in his house already. And even though the father be nothing loth, the mother will never let the thing be done. "What?" she will cry. "Shall all the world make mock of me and say: 'There goes the woman who stripped her kinsman's daughter of her shift to clothe her own daughter withal?'" And in truth such a marriage were a shameful thing and a disgrace. And if folk flaunt it before the world, there's many a kinsman that will not dance at the wedding, I reckon. The second wife rarely related to the first.

157. Aye, the word *apōk* has an ugly sound in the ears of our women. And when a fire won't burn for all their puffing and blowing, one of the children—at a hint from the mother maybe—will sing out: "If it won't burn, just fetch a rival to it!" And the threat may yet frighten the fire into a blaze. But if it still sulks, they bring in a glowing faggot from neighbour's house. And great is their amazement and delight, should the glow of the faggot die down before it is cast on the fire. For it is as though their innermost thoughts had been fulfilled. And "God save us from all rivals!" is the mother's pious prayer. And when two women fall out and come to angry words, the one will taunt the other with the Enmity of rivals proverbial.

cry: "Well I never! You must be my *apōk*, my husband's wife—you're so bitter against me! It could not be else!" And words more biting never left a woman's lips.

So is the step-mother's hatred.

158. But if *apōk* is an ugly word, *mātuna*, or stepmother, is own sister to it. And when the children gather round the fire on a winter's night, and plague their mother to tell them a story, many is the grisly tale she has to tell of the Jealous Rival and the Wicked Stepmother. And when the little lassies take out their dolls, and weary of playing at weddings and mournings, they will play at being stepmother. And all at once you may hear them cry out in chorus: "Stepmother's peevish! Dry bread and hot pinches!" And they roar with laughter as if it were a huge joke, and the little lips curse the stepmother again and again. Not without reason has the saying become a byword in the country. For a stepmother is in truth a mighty hard taskmistress. And when she's angry, as is her wont, it's "Oh, children of my rival!" the whole day long. But when she's in a good humour, it's "Oh, children of my husband!" But she only wants something out of them, I'll be bound; for it's a dog's life she leads them.

No peace in the house.

159. Of a truth, when a rival comes in at the door, peace flies out of the window. For a flouted woman will stick at nothing. She will set her children against their father. And at every turn she will seek the undoing of her rival. If her child should sicken and die, she will pour her woes into everybody's ear: it was all *her* doing, with her wicked sorcery. And in these evil days a lying tongue can do a world of mischief. She has only to whisper it abroad that her rival is no better than she should be; oh yes, she could give his name, an she would. For a breath of scandal means death to wife and lover alike, so jealous are we of the honour of our women. And on the long roll of women killed for adultery—and never was the recording angel more busy

than nowadays—there's many a poor woman foully done to death by the slanderous tongue of her rival. To such a pass has our nice sense of honour brought us in these latter days.

160. Well may a husband mourn the hour he ever took another wife to bed and board. And ruefully will he call to mind that old saw his granny used to mumble: Polygamy a failure.

Wed two for your pleasure,
And repent at your leisure.
Take a third to your bed,
Horns will sprout on your head.
But if you wed four,
You're damned evermore.

And as long as he lives, there's another old saw that will buzz in his ears:

Oh! what a Paradise were life—
If one could wed but half a wife!

161. But there's nothing to scare a widower from marrying again. And if he so choose, the betrothal and wedding will be accompanied by all the pomp and circumstance of his first marriage. Re-marriage of a widower.

162. But it's otherwise with a widow. For a full year after her husband's death she lives on in his house in sorrowing widowhood, under the guardianship of his father or brothers. And if she's well advanced in years, there'll be no marrying in the question, as you may guess. Nor, if she has grown-up sons, would it be a seemly thing. But if her sons be tiny mites, and if she be too weak or poor to support them, small blame to her if she seeks to marry again. Position of a widow.

163. Now when the year of mourning is over, death-feast and all, one of her husband's brothers—younger or elder, it matters not a whit—will come forward first and foremost, if he have a mind to take her to wife. And if she's willing, it's a very simple affair. He merely tells her parents how things lie, and gives her a new set of raiment, and a few womenfolk help her to don it. And The brother-in-law's first claim.

he furnishes two or three sheep for a small feast, and a few friends assemble to eat it and be present at the marriage. Then with a mulla to read the service, it's all over and done with. So you see, there's little fuss and little money spent, when a man marries his brother's widow.

If she declines, she seeks to leave the house.

164. But if the widow eyes her husband's brothers with disfavour, she says no to their courting. And she looks about her for an excuse to leave the house. Now it's for her husband's heirs to support her and her children in meet fashion. So she won't be long in picking a quarrel over the scanty fare or clothing that they furnish, and sooner or later she'll part company and return to her parents' roof. A child at the breast she will take with her, and keep for a time. But grown-up children she must leave behind.

Re-marriage with one who is not a brother-in-law.

165. And with her parents she remains, till one comes forward that would fain have her to wife. And if she says yes—for matters cannot go forward without a widow's consent—there's a *sharbat-khōrī*, or drinking from a loving-cup in honour of the match, among a few of the kin. But there's no feasting, nor ring, nor all that fuss they make over the betrothal of a maiden. And as for the marriage, it's no lengthy affair either. The feasts and the drumming and the dancing all pass off quietly. For has not the widow lost that which is the pride of a maiden? Howbeit in these latter days extravagance is in the air, and our seemly customs are going awry. And at times there's so much fuss made over the marriage of a widow, you might think she was a virgin with the best of them. The bride-price is set low—few would else stoop to marry a widow, I'm thinking. And it goes to the heirs of her husband, as a recompense for all she cost him. Yet if her *mahr*, or dower, was never restored back to her husband, this, to be sure, should be set off in part against the bride-price that must be paid to his heirs.

166. I said that the marriage of a widow cannot go forward if she withhold her consent. And this is true enough, should she stand up staunchly for her rights. Contrariwise, a brother-in-law can find the way to bar a widow from marriage for ever methinks, if he be a man of estate and rank. The truth of the matter is that widows and their remarriage are often the cause of plaguey angry quarrels between two houses. And a quarrel between two houses is like to grow into a feud that shall set the whole countryside by the ears. Witness that bitter feud which sprang up between the Mēngal and the Khidrānī. And in that bloody feud four hundred precious lives were sent to their doom, and all over a widow.

The disposal of widows a fruitful source of quarrel.

SICKNESS

Natural diseases.

167. Man that is born of woman is verily born to die. Yet God takes not the blame thereof on Himself, for He has made disease the scapegoat. Now of some diseases man is the rightful heir, by reason of the frailty and sinfulness of his nature. And of these will I speak first. Touching the poor souls who are possessed with evil spirits I will speak anon.

Treatment.

168. Now I would not have you think that we sit idle with folded hands when illness comes into our midst. We have our cures that have been handed down from generation to generation. And we have physicians amongst us, and many an old granny that is cunning in the use of herbs and simples. And for inoculation and charms and amulets we have Sayyads and mullas and other holy men.

Branding.

169. Foremost and first among our cures are the *sil-ō-dāgh*, the hide and the brand. Tramp the country from end to end, and find me a man with never a brand on his body, if you can. Men branded all over, you'll find in plenty. On what vein the brand should be set, is best left to those that are wise in such things. So much I know: on the left side of the belly there are more brands set than elsewhere. And this is how the branding is done. The sick is made to lie down, and the spot for the brand is marked in black. And if there's no physician at hand, an old dame takes a bit of blue rag and twists it round, until it is of the fashion of a wick. To one end she sets a light, and therewith she slowly dabs the vein again and yet again. Though the sick man shrink with the smart of the burning, the dabbing must go on for all his

moans and groans. But as soon as the smart thrills his flesh no more, 'tis a sign that the brand is all that a brand should be. And there she leaves it, till it blisters to an open sore. Then she makes an ointment with *sundūr** and *murdāsing*† and wax and ghee, and smearing it on a rag anoints the wound withal.

The hide cure.

170. And lives without number have been saved with a *sil*, or hide, in this wise. In the morning we slaughter a sheep or goat, and flay it. Then we strip the sick man of his clothes in a room screened from every breath of wind. Forthwith we wrap him in the hide, still warm from the flaying. And over him we pile blankets and rugs, that the hide may suck out the distemper in the sweat of his body, as he lies in a sound slumber. But the beast that was slaughtered is roasted, and the flesh is given to his kin and neighbours and friends. Yet a morsel thereof is surely first roasted and given to him that is sick; else would the flesh lose its savour. And at midday or sunset he issues from the hide and dons his clothes all unwashed; and unwashed he must remain for full three days.

Different hides according to circumstances.

171. This is that cure we call *sil;* and a mighty fine cure it is. Yet it must not be used blindly, but subtly according to the sex of the sick and the season of the year. For if it be a man or a lad that is sick, 'tis a she-goat or a ewe that should be flayed; but the hide of a he-goat or a ram must be taken for one of the womenfolk. A sheep in the winter, a goat in the summer—that's the way of the wise: for all the world knows that a sheep is as heating as a goat is cooling. And from among the goats better pick out one that's ruddy or bluish, for these are the most medicinal of all. But you'll have to pay all the more for them on that score, I warn you.

Khulīfing, or shock.

172. The wilder folk, aye, and others too, sometimes seek to drive away the disease by fright. For as the poor fellow lies on his bed, dreaming of nothing but his

* Red lead. † Litharge.

own sorry plight, up rushes one of the kin pursued by another with sword in hand and wrath on face; or a gun is fired in his ears; or there's a sudden cry of "Fire!" or "Snake!" or "Murder!" Or, without a word of warning, we topple him over into an icy stream. And he's scared out of his wits and breaks forth into a great sweat, please God, and is quit of his disease—of his fever or wasting sickness or whatever it be.

The tortoise egg cure.

173. Touching our drugs and simples, I will say somewhat when I treat of the divers ailments. But haply you've never dreamt of borrowing strength from the *sarkuk*, or tortoise. Now though the tortoise hides her eggs in the bushes, she's lucky indeed if they escape the shepherd's keen eye. For he pounces on them greedily, and sells them in the village. And they are stored in the huts against the day of sickness. Now a tortoise egg—*zartōl* we call it by-the-by—is cooked as soon as it's gathered, for fear the young should hatch out. And when the need arises, we pound it to powder, and mix a pinch thereof with a pinch of pounded dill. Thrice a day for full three days do we give the sick a dose in water or melted ghee. And for full seven *bēl* after the last dose—and two *bēl*, you must know, go to a day—he may eat nothing save unsalted bread with ghee or butter. Of a truth the tortoise egg is a food that lends strength to them that are weak and wasting away.

Amulets and charms.

174. Nevertheless, forasmuch as the labour of sinful man is often labour lost, we arm ourselves with *hudda*, or charms; with *tāvīz*, or amulets; and with *band*, or knotted threads, got from holy men. Now as soon as a man falls sick, folks think that some enemy is at the bottom of it with his sorcery. For sorcery is abroad in the land; and of all the artful sorcerers in the world a Zikrī mulla is the worst of the lot, I assure you. And the best safeguard against sorcery is surely some charm. Now in the old days, Heaven knows where our

fathers got their charms from. For they used to dabble in dark and unholy charms; but the knowledge of such has all but died out of the country, and the man that would seek them out had best go seeking in far-off Bengal. In these days our charms are holy charms, verses from the Korān, or sayings of the saints, or the like. Well, some pious man mumbles a charm over the sick; and having so done, he breathes heavily upon him, as though he were puffing the calamity away. But if the sick man be at a distance, he takes a cup of water, and breathes over it instead, as he utters the charm. As for amulets, they are charms that are written down, and tied round wrist or neck or waist or other part of the body. But many holy men who can neither write nor yet read would have us believe that a *band* is better than all the amulets and charms put together. So they take a thread—and a blue thread they think the best for their purpose—and in it they knot some knots, mumbling magic words the while. And the knotted thread is given to the sick, to be tied round his neck.

175. Furthermore we bestow alms in the hope that we may purchase therewith health for him that is sick. And if the sickness is a grievous sickness, those that have riches often bid their handmaids and serfs be free in God's name, and go whithersoever they will. Such charity, they are assured, will verily win favour in the sight of God. Yet have I heard of serfs who are loth to quit their masters in this fashion: on the Day of Judgment they would have trouble enough with their own sins, they should think, without having the sins of their masters bundled on to their shoulders into the bargain.

Khairāt, or alms.

176. Moreover, we have an advocate with God in the *pīr*, or saint, of the household. Nay, rather, most folks worship their saint with greater awe than they worship God. For ask a man to swear by God, and he'll swear briskly enough. Yet ask him to swear by his saint, and he'll go all of a tremble, and there'll be a mighty pother

Khwarda, earth taken from the shrine of the family saint.

to get the oath out of him. So 'tis to the saints we turn whenever it goes ill with us. Now in every house the womenfolk keep some earth we call *khwaṛda* or *khuṛda*, taken from the shrine of the saint of the family against their hour of need. And the first cure the troubled housewife will essay is to give the sick a bit thereof to swallow. And she prays to the saint to grant them his aid, vowing to offer up to his holiness this or that in return. Now if the father of the house has one saint and the mother yet another, they worship severally. But the children must follow the father's saint first and foremost; and thereafter 'tis meet they show reverence to the saint of the mother. Thus the first shaving of the head must be dedicated to the saint of the father, but the second shaving or a portion thereof should surely be dedicated to the saint of the mother. So if a child be sick and the father's saint seem of no avail, the mother will not be backward to see what her saint can do. And should the child be made whole, she won't let the neighbours hear the last of it for many a long day.

Sacrifice to the saints.

177. Not that we content ourselves with prayers and vows. For as soon as illness comes into the house, knives are whetted for the slaughter of a beast from our flocks as a sacrifice and peace-offering. Now there are shrines dotted up and down the country; and hard by every shrine of holiness there's a *kōsh-jahī*, or altar, for the sacrifice of blood. And one serves at the shrine and sees to the sacrifice, flaying the beast and dividing the flesh. To him is allotted a set portion of the sacrifice. One fore-leg, the breast-piece, four ribs, and the hide are commonly his portion. And though he may be covetous of filthy lucre, and demand more money than the worshippers may offer, yet for more than his allotted portion of the flesh does he never ask. And the flesh that is left over is carved into as many shares as there are folk present at the sacrifice. And lots are cast, and each takes the share that falls to his lot. But at the shrine of Pīr

Dōpāsī in Ḍhāḍar, the keeper of the shrine cries: "*Luṭṭ e !*"—It's free spoil !—as soon as he has flayed the beast ; and those that stand around pounce upon it, as though it were loot.

Ṭāl, or *shank*, *khalling*, vow of sacrifice.

178. But if the sick seem sorely nigh unto death, we are not over-hasty to slaughter our beasts. Despair itself cannot rob us of our wits. We make a compact with God that should the sick be indeed spared unto us, such and such a beast will be sacrificed in His honour. One of the kin takes in his hand a *ṭāl* or a *shank*, a green stalk or a green twig, and strikes the beast therewith, saying: "Even as I strike thee thus, even so will I surely sacrifice thee in God's Name, let but the sick become whole. Prove then an acceptable sacrifice unto God and take this calamity from us." Thrice is the beast struck, and thrice is the vow uttered. And if it be a goat or a sheep that is struck, it is tethered apart from the flock. But on the ear of a bullock we tie a bit of cotton, in token that it is vowed unto God.

The sick do not eat of the sacrifice.

179. And if our prayers are heard and the sick becomes whole, the beast is sacrificed, and its flesh is given to the poor and the neighbours. Yet he that was sick and is now whole may not eat thereof, nor may any other that was lately in like case, or the sickness will surely cleave unto him again. And it were well if the kin refrain from the flesh, lest the scourge of which they are quit come upon them once more.

Mōking, or fictitious sale in place of sacrifice.

180. Now if it be a horse or a camel or other beast of great value that we would vow unto God, we do not vow to sacrifice it, but vow to sell it at a price and to give the money in alms to the poor. And if the sick be restored to health, we sell the beast sure enough. Yet we sell it at a false price that falls far short of its value ; and for a like sum we buy it back, and spend as much on alms, or on sheep or goats for sacrifice.

Inevitable diseases.

181. Now from some of the diseases to which man is heir, he may, God willing, escape. But from some

there is no escape, and these we call *dein*. These are diseases that will surely overtake a man, be it soon or be it late. And the most dread of all such is smallpox; for even if a man live his life unscathed by the scourge, it will verily pursue him to the grave and feast to the full on his vile body. Nay, the very stones cannot escape its clutches: witness the pock-marks on such you learned folk call fossils.

Puṭau (smallpox).

182. At the first approach of smallpox in the neighbourhood a mother has no rest until her children are inoculated at the hands of some holy man. Happily there are always Sayyads moving up and down the country, inoculating as they go. And there are people we call Shaī or Kahērī, who often visit the camps in the summer season on the same quest. In some parts indeed are these holy men eyed askance, and there be folks that call them the harbingers of the dread disease. Fools they are and ingrates, little better than those impious Zikrī of Makrān, who will have nothing to do with Sayyads at all, so froward are they and deaf to the true Faith.

Inoculation.

183. Now in Kalāt there's a lady, a Chishtī Sayyad of great holiness, whose inoculation is prized above all. Womenfolk and lads are inoculated in her very presence by her *khalīfa*, or disciple, and are then touched with the hem of her head-dress. But men may not come into her presence, and must perforce go without the healing blessing of her touch. And this is how the inoculation is done. On the right wrist the *khalīfa* makes a small cut with a razor. Into the cut he puts some *pullur*, or smallpox husks, and wraps it round with a white bandage. And if you ask where the husks come from, why, he that is inoculated is straitly enjoined to bring some in, when he or any of his household are attacked. Hence it is that the stock never runs low.

Sayyad Salīm

184. And those of Jhalawān can boast of a mighty wonderful razor to inoculate withal. For in the olden

time there was a right holy man, Sayyad Salīm Shā. And daily there came about him a great throng of people, that he should rid the smallpox out of their midst. And being sore beset by their entreaties, he called to one of his disciples, and put a razor in his hand, and bade him go forth and inoculate the people. But the disciple would not take the razor; for he was a man of little faith, and feared the people. So the saint spake unto the razor; and lo! poxes came out upon it. And he spake yet again; and lo! the razor became whole, save only for the pock-marks, which endure to this day. For to this day is the razor in use, and Shakar, Shāwānī, is the proud man that owns it. And this is the virtue thereof—as many pock-marks as there be thereon, so many poxes and no more will appear on him that is inoculated therewith. Shā's razor.

185. Now as soon as the scourge enters a household, the mother bustles off in alarm to the village shop, and entreats the Hindu lady of the house to come and look upon the sick, that they may know of a surety whether he is sick of the smallpox or no. So the Hindu dame goes back with her to the house. And she sniffs the hot hands of the sick; and if she smells the smell of smallpox, she straitly orders the sick to be curtained off behind a *killa*, that none may come nigh him. In the room where he lies no food may be cooked. Nor, until he be whole, may the people of the household wash their heads or put on a change of apparel; for the Hindu dame knows well that this would surely displease the smallpox goddess. On the morrow she looks in again. And if she finds pocks on the body, she calls the mother in, that she may gaze thereon, and lay her warnings to heart. Yet if the pocks are reddish, she bids her be of good cheer; all will be well in the end. But if they seem blackish to her eye, she shakes her head sadly; for black is the colour of mourning and death. Now if it's a babe at the breast that's stricken down, we feed the Treatment.

mother on mutton and other heating diet. For with smallpox all cooling foods must be eschewed. And there's nothing like boiled juniper berries for those that are grown-up, unless it be draughts of scalding tea, spiced with ginger and cinnamon and pepper and sugar. But this, to be sure, only the rich can afford. Now when the Hindu lady comes to visit the sick for the third time, she sits her down before him, and in her Hindkī tongue she sings hymns in praise of the smallpox goddess. And on the seventh day she smears the sick all over with butter, and bathes him down with lukewarm water, never ceasing from hymning the praises of the goddess, while she's busied over the task. And in due course, by God's leave, the sick becomes whole. Well, this is what the villagers do. But the people of the wilds, far away from shops and Hindus, must just get along as best as they may with their own old ladies, with never a Hindu dame to help them. And woe to the poor wretch in Makrān who falls a victim to smallpox, or *grumpuk* as they call it there. For he's driven out of house and home, and out of the village, and is left to languish alone. None will come nigh him, save only such as have been stricken with smallpox before.

Trinzuk (chicken-pox).

186. Now if a child is for ever picking its nose, 'tis a sure sign to the anxious mother that it's ailing. So she scratches its nose with the lower end of the collar of her shift. And if this is of no avail, she will essay to stop the mischief by scratching its nose with the sole of her shoe. But should the child nevertheless have fever for three days running and grow peevish and fretful, she dreads some grim *dein* or other. If it's only *trīnzuk*, or chicken-pox, after all, she makes light of it. The child, to be sure, is kept apart, but less for fear it pass on the distemper to another, than for fear the sight of some one unclean should make the fever worse. And a sheep is slaughtered, and the heart and liver and lungs are roasted and given to the sick child to bring out the rash. But if this fails, ewe's

milk is boiled and given well sweetened. And once the rash is out, we feed the child with a cooling diet.

187. But if the poor mite has burning fever and a running nose and a vexing cough, it looks mighty like *surkhuk*, which is a very different matter. So it's best to call in a Hindu lady for her counsel. And though all others say no, take her word for it, should she say yes. And if there's no rash, seek to bring it out with the heating diet used for *trūnzuk*. But if the red rash comes out of its own accord, forbear. For now's the time for a cooling diet; and if the poor thing is thirsty, give it a cup of goat's milk. And on the seventh day its body should be smeared with butter and bathed down with lukewarm water. And the bedding and the clothes must be changed, for the disease has run its course. Yet so heating is *surkhuk*, there's danger it may have pierced holes in the bowels. Hence best give the child for three days before breakfast an ounce of antimony wrapped in the fat of a goat's guts, to patch up the holes withal. And though the child be now restored to health, he must feed on rice and milk and slops for full forty days. Yet how many have been nursed through *surkhuk* back to life, only to be killed by kindness with sweetmeats and dainties! *Surkhuk* (measles).

188. Among the ailments that are the common lot of man is the cough we call *khartiṭō*. Happy is he who escapes it in childhood, for in the fullness of age it's of little account. Among the young it works havoc. At the first no drugs are given the child, lest the cough be checked and seek an exit by piercing the lungs. Yet is he kept apart, he and his bedding and his platters. Nor may he eat cold food or rice or any oily substance. The poor mite coughs and whoops, and whoops and coughs. Lord, how he whoops! Nevertheless, the worse the cough, the better. And if it ends in a whoop like the crow of a cock, the mother's hopes run high. And if it so racks him that he breaks wind, the worst is surely *Khartiṭō* (whooping-cough).

over. Not that he is left to struggle unaided. Once or twice in the day we give him a draught of water mixed with the juice of walnut bark, and *khushdār*, or liquorice. But best of all is a handful of powder made from the dried head of a hare, given each morning for three days. So now you know the meaning of those hares' heads you see stored up in our huts.

Kazar (diphtheria ?).

189. Most babes have to pass through a bout of *kazar*. It begins with low fever and purging. The tiny body becomes frailer and frailer, but the head larger and yet more large. And if the pit in the nape of the neck grows deep, 'tis a sign to any old granny that overmuch crying has brought about the dropping of the *aḍḍī*, or tonsils. So at dawn she dips her second finger in salt and ashes or powdered thyme, and thrusts it down the babe's throat and lifts the *aḍḍī* up. Thrice is this done, but always right early in the morning. But if the fever does not abate, the kin slaughter a bullock or a goat, and take out the stomach, guts and all. And in the stomach they slit a hole and stuff the babe within, that only head and neck peep out. There it nestles for four hours, or maybe more. And when it is taken out, it is wiped with a rag; for three full days there must be no washing. And they soak some thyme or other cold herb overnight, and the babe is given the water to drink on the morrow. And in a fortnight, God willing, it is free of the *kazar*. Nevertheless, the poor thing may well be frail after all its trouble. So they fatten it with tortoise eggs, powdered up with a little dill. And if it is still at the breast, the mother may eat no salt with her bread for full five days. So the babe waxes fat, and once whole is like to be free from *kazar* ever after.

Pūshar (colds).

190. What with the biting winter and the cool summer nights, a cold is common any time of the year. For three days a man suffers his cold to run its course. Yet he eats and drinks by himself, and keeps his platters apart. On the fourth day he takes *ḍalīda*, a pottage of

kharrumēn, or parched green wheat, for supper, but never a drop of water. And if he sinks off into a sound slumber, with luck he will soon be himself again. Another fine old cure is made of the herb *gandarēm*, which is stocked in most houses by the ruder folk. A few leaves are boiled in water and given just before bed-time. Then, with a good sleep and a good sweat, a man should shake off the cold. But many of our old herbs have been ousted by tea ever since the last Afghān war; for a caravan laden with bales and bales of tea was looted in the Bōlān, and tea passed from hand to hand throughout the country. And the hill-folk use it as a cure for colds to this day. But the villagers, and those of Sarāwān above all, learnt to drink it for their pleasure, and had to turn elsewhere for a physic. So they took to *barsh*, a drug made of opium, pellitory, ginger, saffron, pepper, and other spices, taken in honey and green tea, often with a pinch of the powdered testicles of an otter. But the drug, though pleasant enough, is mighty costly, and has been the ruin of many a man that has been seized with a craving for it. So most folks who have colds and scoff at the old-fashioned cures use opium instead.

191. But let a man physic his cold never so much, it may turn to a cough. Then may he eat neither goat's flesh nor rice, for both are cold foods. Three nights running must he take a draught of water in which the plant *charmāing* has been well boiled, leaves and stumps and all. And if this fail to ease his pain, we boil *khushdār* roots and walnut bark, and give him the potion sweetened with sugar. But if all will not do, we try yet another potion, made of the gum of the tamarisk, well seasoned with pepper. *Kulla* (cough).

192. Any old body in the country can tell you how to escape sore eyes. Just pluck a *kunchit*, or sesame flower, and say: "Oh *kunchit*, keep my eyes in your keeping for one whole year, I conjure you." And so saying, *Khan bash manning* (ophthalmia, etc.).

swallow the flower whole, and never let it touch the teeth. And as many flowers as you charm and gulp down in this wise, for so many years will you be safe. Now should one of your eyes be afflicted, never look in the glass, or the eye that is afflicted will surely afflict the eye that is sound—from jealousy, old wives say. If your brother has sore eyes, don't play with him. And every time you come nigh him, mind you sing out: "Your eyes are of gold, and mine are of dung!" if you would avert the evil. It's all so simple, that one wonders why sore eyes are so common throughout the country.

Kāṭumnā khalh (neuralgia, etc.).

193. Womenfolk often suffer from aching heads, yet they oil them and bandage them and take snuff, and the ache is gone. Or if their own devices are in vain, they can go to a holy man for a charm or an amulet. But in the winter even a hardy man may be racked with a pain in his head. Then had he best sit facing the sun as it rises, and snuff up some powder made from crushed *kaifal* bark, that he may sneeze the ache away.

Dandān nusing, grinding the teeth in one's sleep.

194. Perhaps you may not account it an illness to grind the teeth in one's sleep. And indeed in a boy or a man 'tis a mighty lucky token; for he will surely grind his teeth on the head of his enemy. But it's far otherwise with a girl or a woman. And it were best to stop it betimes, lest grievous misfortunes befall the household. Now the first cure we essay is that the girl must drink out of a kettle for some days. And the mother keeps watch at her bed by night, and at the first grinding she slaps her soundly as she sleeps. But if this be of no avail, we see what amulets and charms will do. Yet to tie a broken harp-string round the girl's neck is the safest cure of all.

Kahv (dyspepsia, etc.).

195. Common enough is the ailment we call *kahv*, which bears down like a weight on the belly, and racks it with pain. Many a child has it carried off, and many a young mother after the agony of childbirth. We have a physic for it we call *kahvī*, an ounce of crushed pepper

in five times as much of ghee. And yet the hide and the brand are the best after all, I dare say. Even full-grown men fall victims to *kahv*, mostly when the mulberries are ripe. For old wives know well that it comes from gorging on mulberries and the swilling of milk. And if the pain waxes great, and hides and brands and the rest prove of no avail, it will haply turn to that deadly colic of which I shall presently speak.

196. Aches and pains there be without number. Yet when a man says he's suffering from *khalh*, or pain, he means the griping pain of colic. So common is it, that many a man carries about with him a dose of *kahvī*, to give him ease. Or he keeps by him a dose of *kavalī*, a powder made by pounding *pīun-pullī*,* *bō-i-mādrān*,† *mārmūtk*,‡ *nōshādir*,§ *chashsham*, *jaukār*, *zaghmanā-bē*,‖ and *maunō-pilpil*.¶ But a shepherd never troubles himself about such drugs. He has but to pluck wild thyme from the nearest bush and chew it, till the pain is gone. *Khalh* (colic).

197. Yet for all our drugs and herbs, colic and *kahv* alike may turn to *khalh-i-āsī*, that deadly colic when hands and feet grow icy cold. Then indeed the kin fear the worst, and that right early. Howbeit they rest not from their ministrations. With a draught of pounded *gwach* mixed with water they seek to make the sufferer vomit. And if this be of no avail, they kill a fowl and rend it asunder and tie it around his belly, guts and feathers and all. But if the physician thinks that it is *kahv* that has brought the wretch to such a plight, he acts in this wise. First he rubs the *kahvanā ragh*, the vein that runs down the left side of the belly—not with oil, for that would cause the greater mischief—but with water. But if this brings no relief, neither from motions nor from vomiting, the vein must be branded. Yet the time methinks has come to sacrifice sheep and goats, *Khalh-i-āsī*.

* *Matricaria lusiocarpa.*
† *Achillea santolina*, Stocks.
‡ *Boucerosia aucheriana.*
§ *Sal ammoniac.*
‖ Rock-salt.
¶ Black pepper.

nay, rather—so piteous is the case—to dedicate them to God, if haply it will please Him to snatch the poor wretch from the very jaws of death.

Kaval (bilious attack).

198. If a man wash down rice or oily food with a draught of water, or munch sweetmeats after filling his belly with vegetables, he may look to a bout of *kaval*. His face will turn yellow, his mouth will taste bitter, desire for food will fail, and drowsiness will overpower him. Then he had best take a pinch of *kavalī* thrice a day in a little water. Or let him take the juice squeezed from green *kaṛkāva* with a little *piṭkī*, or alum, the first thing in the morning for three days. If these fail, brand him lightly behind the ear. Others pour a little oil and water in a pot at sunrise, and put it on his head, and stir it with some green plant. And as soon as the oil and water mingle, they throw the mess into a running stream; and thereby he should find relief.

Zardōī (jaundice).

199. But if nothing be done, and the sickness runs its course, it will surely turn to *zardōī*. Everything grows yellow, face and eyes and body, and his water is as blood. Round his neck we tie a red onion, and there we leave it till he becomes whole. And when it dries and turns yellow, 'tis a sign that the sickness is slackening its grip. Many and divers are the cures we essay. Among wild folk, the sick is given the urine of a rutting camel mixed with alum, to break his fast withal. Others give him draughts of vinegar and water. But those who have seen something of the world soak two dry figs overnight in vinegar, and give them to the sick man at dawn. On the morrow he must take three, and the day after four, until the dose rises to nine. Then it drops one by one, day by day, until at the last it drops to nothing. And if he isn't whole by then, 'tis passing strange.

Zardōīnā khal, the jaundice-stone.

200. But the weirdest cure of all have I kept to the last. Folks search for a nest of new-born vultures.

And as soon as the mother's back is turned, they smear the nestlings with turmeric. And when the mother finds her young as yellow as yellow can be, small blame to her if she thinks them stricken with *zardōī*. Off she flies for the *zardōīnā khal*, a stone whose whereabouts she alone knows. And into the nest she pops it, the silly bird. And sure enough, the yellow drops off the young ones as the days go by. But after a week back come the villagers to the nest, and pick out the stone, and go on their way rejoicing. And they tie it round the sick man's neck to his great comfort and speedy health. A wondrous stone this, say you; and so say I—though truth to tell, I've not clapped eyes on it yet.

201. *Dilōī* often follows on the heels of *zardōī* if it be not checked betimes. And the body wastes away, save only the spleen, which waxes fat. Now the disease is as common among those that live on rice, as it is rare among those that drink the milk of the camel. Hence it is that we withhold rice from one that is sick of the spleen, and give him camel's milk to drink. But first we make the camel thrice swish her tail in the milk, for this lends virtue to the draught, and makes the sick man purge. (So if you're hale and hearty and ask a camel-man for a drink, best keep your eyes open, or he'll dip the camel's tail in the pail to your vast discomfort.) But there are other cures. Some try vinegar or figs, as for *zardōī*. And others gather a great pile of ripe radishes, and peel them and chop them up, and salt them well, and put them in a pot, and leave the pot overnight on the house-top. And in the morning the sick man must break his fast by eating the whole pile. Thrice is he given this diet, once every other day. *Dilōī* (spleen).

202. Yet those maybe are wisest after all who call a Chishtī Sayyad to aid. In his holy hands they place a keen sword. And he makes him that is sick lie down before him, with belly bared to the air. Then uttering strange charms on the blade, he presses it with both Spleen-cutting by the Sayyads.

hands firmly against the belly, and keeps it thus for a space, before he suffers him to arise. For three days is this done, or ever the sick man breaks his fast. In this wise is his spleen cut down. Indeed thereafter he sometimes passes blood with his water, which is surely proof and to spare of the saint's powers.

Heart disease.

203. Now if the kin fear that the sick is suffering from a weak heart, or peradventure has lost heart altogether, they make him lie down. And they take a cup of water, and hold it over his left breast. Then they melt a leaden bullet and drop the molten lead into the cup. And eagerly they look at the shape of the lead in the water. For if it has taken on the fashion of a heart, with the man's heart there can be little amiss. Otherwise they must make essay over and over again. And if they still fail, the man is surely in evil case.

Hilḵ (fever).

204. Fever we have always with us. But in the spring and the fall of the year it's at its worst, and some parts, like Ḵhōzdār and Bāghwāna and Zahrī, have an evil name above all others. Divers though the fevers, one and all are left to run their course for the first three days. No drugs are given. The sick man lies on his bed, with blanket piled upon blanket, to bring him out into a sweat. But when the three days are over, we drug him with a will. Nowadays there's never a man that has not heard of quinine, and does not try to come by it. Howbeit it has not wholly ousted the good old drugs and herbs of our fathers, and it is of these that I would speak. First among them is the *pūn-pullī*.* It is soaked overnight, and a draught of the water is given to the sick at dawn and every three hours thereafter. If he suffers from the cold fever—*hilḵ-laṛza*, that is, or ague—the water is first boiled. This indeed is the common way drugs are given: in scalding water in the winter, and in cold water in the summer, and surely there is sense in it. But if the fever does not break, we

* *Matricaria lusiocarpa.*

take two pots. In the one we put a little *rūsh*,* and in the other some cold water. Seven times is water poured from the one pot and shaken in the other, to cleanse the *rūsh* withal. And neither pot may touch the ground, lest virtue go out of the *rūsh*. And after the *rūsh* has been seven times drenched, it is handed to the sick to drink. And if this be of no avail, I guess we will not be slack to try the hide and the brand.

The *kaltāp* cure.

205. There's a strange old cure we call *kaltāp* for a fever that follows on a chill. The kin take seven stones, as large maybe as apricots, and fling them in the fire. And on the fire they put a kettle of water. And when the kettle begins to sing, they add some chopped straw or some *simsōk*.† And so they leave it to boil. But the sick man is wrapped in a blanket, and made to sit in front of a cauldron. Therein they pour the boiling water, and into the water they plunge one by one the stones that are now red hot. And the smoke and the heat rise up into his nostrils, as he crouches and sniffs over the cauldron. And after the space of about five minutes they lay him back in his bed, and pile on the rugs. And if he comes out into a muck sweat, so that even his feet are moist, they rejoice, for the fever has left him.

Precautions during convalescence.

206. But for two or three days he may not issue forth into the air. Nor may he eat parched wheat nor any boiled flesh till the new moon appear, lest the fever overtake him anew. Yet to stay that ravening hunger that comes upon a man after fever and is called *chuh*, they slaughter a sheep—in the summer, as you may guess, a goat—and roast the flesh, and let him eat his fill. But if he eat of the flesh of a fowl within a fortnight, he will verily be stricken with *sitānī*, the fever that strikes a man every third day.

Sitānī, or *seī-tākī* (quartan fever).

207. Now all fevers, for aught I know, may well be the invention of the Jinns. At least so folk say. But that the Jinns are at the bottom of *sitānī*, hardly a man

* *Sisymbrium Sophia.* † *Nepeta glomerulosa.*

could be found to doubt. So why trouble about drugs? Best go to some holy man for an amulet; unless, to be sure, you've some *pāṭō* grains in the house, whereof I spoke when I spoke of the bridal.

Yak-tāki (tertian fever).

208. As for the fever that comes on every other day, we treat it at first like any other fever. But if it clings to the man, we go to one that was born a twin, and give him a blue thread, and bid him knot it in five or seven places. And the knotted thread is hung round the sick man's neck, and keeps the fever at a distance. Howbeit some folks think it better to make a doll, and dress it up in gaudy colours, for all the world like a lady of honour. And early on the morrow when the fever is due, one of the kin rouses the sick man from his slumber, and making him take the doll and some parched wheat in his hand, he leads him to a lonely tree, where none can see him, and there he leaves him. And beneath the tree the sick man seats the doll, and in her lap he pours the parched wheat, and says: "Poor thing, keep my fever with you, I pray you." And having so said, he hurries away with never a backward look, lest the fever come upon him again.

Nanaṇā hiḻḥ (night-fever).

209. Amulets are best against the *nanaṇā hiḻḥ*, or *duz-hiḻḥ* as some call it, that fever that comes like a thief in the night, and is gone before the rising of the sun. Howbeit a mother will not fail to try her hand at a cure. When the sick is wrapped in slumber, she lays a wooden ladle in the bed by his side, so stealthily that he knows naught of it. And with luck the fever leaves him. Or haply she will go to work more cunningly still. She will pilfer some little thing from the house of some peppery old neighbour. For, says she, he will fly into a rage when he finds the thing gone, and will abuse the thief roundly, and the abuse will scare the fever away. But once the fever has gone for good and all, she will send the thing back to her neighbour with many a pretty word of thanks. Now in Kalāt there are fakīrs

of the Saint Bēd, past-masters at ridding a man of the night-fever. At nightfall one of them comes to the sick-bed, stick in hand, and cries aloud this Dēhwārī doggerel:

That villain, that bastard,
Whom asses have fostered,
Whose dam's Hindustānī,
Whose sire's Khōrasānī,
Who works mischief by night!
Here he shall not, he shall not alight!

At each of the four corners of the bed he calls out the charm. Then with a dole of bread for his wage he straightway leaves the house, and never looks behind him, lest the charm be broken. But if a Bēd fakīr be not to hand, some man in the household who knows the charm takes his place, and gets his dole of bread, just as if he were one of the holy men himself. Three nights running must folks act in this wise to fulfil the charm.

Ballā-hilh (typhus).

210. Of all fevers the most dread is *ballā-hilh*, the great fever. 'Tis a very grievous visitation from on high, and meet is it indeed to beseech God's pardon, offering up sacrifices of sheep and goats, and propitiating the Sayyads and saints and holy men. And these are the signs thereof. The man rolls about, racked in a burning fever, his eyes all bloodshot, his talk witless and wild. At these signs we take him up and lay him alone in a room, where none but those who nurse him may enter. Or if needs must, we curtain him off in a corner of the common room. And not only the sick-bed, but the house and the very village are shunned by the neighbourhood. For it is in truth a very deadly disease, that passes lightly from one man to another. Now for the first three days, as is our wont, we do not physic the poor wretch. Small wonder then, if he die outright, so swift and sudden is the disease. But when the three days are out, we give him some heating food and drugs. And a fatted sheep is slaughtered, and the heart and the liver and the lungs are boiled and given him to eat. For were they not given to the sick, the disease would batten

on his heart and his liver and his lungs, you may take my word for it. This is what we believe, but if the man of science scoffs at us, we must just let him scoff. Then we pile blankets and rugs on him, that he may sleep and sweat. And in the evening we give him a draught of water in which seeds of the juniper have been drenched, to make him sweat the more. Now this is the course of the disease. On the third day it presses a man sore; on the seventh it waxes in strength, until on the ninth it is at its height. And if the sick can battle through that day, there's hope he may battle through to the end. Yet must his kin be ever on the watch. For on the fifteenth day the disease seizes him very grievously, and on the twenty-first it makes a last effort to snatch the life away. And even though the man escape the jaws of death that day, it is many a weary month before he recovers his strength. But whether he live or whether he die, his clothes and his bedding and his vessels are bundled out of the house, and burnt to ashes. Howbeit some witless folks, accounting it unthrift to do the like, cleanse the vessels with hot ashes again and again, and wash the bedding and clothes throughly in a running stream far away from the village. Fools! have they never heard of what happened in Nichāra, where men drank of the water of a stream that had been defiled with the clothing of a man sick with the great fever, and drinking died?

Mubārakī (enteric).

211. Less dread than the great fever, yet the same in kind, is the fever we call *mubārakī*, "the lucky." Now *mubārakī* is of two kinds: red or yellow, according as the eyes turn this colour or that; and the red *mubārakī* is the worse of the two. Against *mubārakī* we fight with heating drugs, seeking to drive it forth in the sick man's sweat. And if all goes well, *puslak*, or pimples, break out on chest and shoulders and back. And now we must guard the sick against a chill, lest it bring on the *bādsār* fever, which will cling to him for many a long

day, or strike him down with the pitiful madness we call *sarsām*. And if the disease be not stayed within three weeks or shortly after, the poor wretch becomes so wasted with the lowering drugs and the sweating, that haply he will fall into the wasting sickness. And then —a long farewell to him!

Tahō khalling (paralysis, phlebitis, etc.).

212. If a man issues forth into the open when he is in a great sweat after fever, likely enough the wind will strike him, and cripple him of a limb or even of one whole side of his body. Then we lay him in a warm bed behind a *killa*, or curtain, to ward off women with their monthly course or others suffering from uncleanness. And forth goes one to shoot as many wild pigeons as he may. For until the sick is cured of his sickness, one pigeon a day must he eat, whether roast or boiled. Seven at the least he will surely need. And let the man who knows a better cure for wind-stroke, bring it forward if he can. I guess there's none to match it. And men well stricken in years often suffer from wind-stroke, and these in truth are in evil case. And a woman sometimes quits her bed after childbirth lamed by the wind of one leg. Poor thing! she is crippled for such a weary while, that her kin in despair drug her with many drugs, which in the end ease her of her pain by easing her of life.

Ḍākī, or *vabā*, or *bavā* (cholera).

213. The visits of cholera are few and short. The country, Heaven be praised, is too dry for its liking. Some villages, less lucky than others, are stricken down one year in every ten, maybe for their sins or because they lie on the King's highway. For some folk say that it stalks up from Sind or the coast, and some say that it is sent by God for the punishment of sins and the slighting of holy men or of the souls of saints that are dead. As for me, who am I that I should judge between them? Haply both are right. But howsoever it come, folk take to the hills when come it does. And they entreat God's pardon for their sins, and offer up sacrifices of sheep and goats at the shrines of the saints. And

those that are still whole tie an onion round their necks, and eat raw onions with their bread. To the sick they give the juice of onions mingled with vinegar. Those that die of the scourge are accounted martyrs of the lesser order in the next world; yet are they buried after the manner of the common dead. But those that live in villages that are clear of the scourge never come nigh a village that is stricken.

Prevalence of *ranj* (consumption, etc.).

214. Hapless the house that is smitten with *ranj*. The very word breathes of blank despair and death, and is never uttered in the hearing of the victim or his kin. Many a house has this wasting sickness laid desolate. Some there be that are for ever in its grip from one generation to another. Alas! it waxes in strength as the years roll on. Who indeed may think himself safe? For it lurks in the clothing and ornaments the sick may once have worn. It is abroad in the land. It stalks among the young men and takes to itself the pick: lads of wit and high birth are taken, and those who taste too freely of the joys of life; the shepherd and the ploughboy are left. Among the womenfolk it lays low the mothers after childbirth and young maidens who brood over the late coming of wedlock.

Its treatment.

215. Yet so soft is its tread and stealthy, that none can mark its first approach. But when a fever clings about a sick man for days and days, and the flesh begins to part company with the bones, we fear the worst. Now must the young folk in the house hold aloof from him, nor may they eat off the vessels he has touched. But the old folk bustle around him the more, lest he get an inkling of the dread that is in their hearts. And in the early days we seek to put new life in him by physicking him with the eggs of the tortoise, touching which I have already spoken. But if the wasting be not stayed thereby, with his food we mix things unclean, but never let him reck of it. For three days he gulps down a bit of wolf's guts with his morning meal, and is none the wiser. And

should this avail naught, for three days we try the flesh of a *shakuk*, or magpie. But if both these fail, we are not yet at our wits' end, for the flesh of the porcupine is the best of all. But should the poor wretch waste and waste away notwithstanding, and should hides and brands and frights prove all in vain, God help him; man cannot.

POSSESSION BY EVIL SPIRITS

Kubēnī, or possession by evil spirits.

216. These, then, are among the most common of the ills that come by nature and by nature are combated. But many a strange disease and many a strange death must be laid at the door of the Jinns. For in the length and breadth of the land you will scarce find a home where a Jinn has not got a footing.

The Jinns.

217. In truth the Jinns are a mischievous and malicious crew, always up to some prank. They love to perch on the topmost bough of some old mulberry-tree, so it's as well to set a light beneath it to humour them. And they tie knots in a horse's mane, and think it fine fun to swing themselves to and fro, hanging on to the strands. And when there's a wedding on foot among them, they set fire to our houses, that they may have a cheerful blaze at their wedding jollity. Night and day they are on the look-out to do us a mischief. They eat with us when we eat if ever we forget to say *Bismilla* as grace; they lure us on like a will-o'-the-wisp when we go abroad; they dog us even in our dreams. At noon and from sunset to sunrise, these are the hours when we have to be on our guard. And dusk is the most perilous time of all. Foolhardy the man that then ventures nigh a graveyard, or a ruined house, or an altar of sacrifice, or some gnarled old tree, or some spot that is unclean. The Jinns will surely pounce upon him unawares, and do him grievous harm. Pray Heaven, he live to tell the tale.

Beating a Jinn out of a child with a shoe.

218. From earliest childhood one must be on one's guard against them. Until the first shaving of the head no child should go out alone after dusk. And if it sickens, all the neighbourhood will chide the mother for

her carelessness: couldn't she keep an eye on the poor little mite, but must needs give the Jinns a chance to work their wicked will? No matter what the mother may say, or what oath she may take, they will not listen: it's as plain as a pikestaff that a Jinn got hold of the child while her back was turned. So in the end there's nothing for it; the poor mother must just take all the blame on herself. And first some wise old crone tries her hand, to see what she can do to make the Jinn quit his hold. So at sunrise she takes the mother and the child apart, and sits down with her face towards the sun. And she stretches out her legs and lays the child along them, face downwards, with its feet towards her. And mumbling some weird words, she strikes it across the buttocks with a shoe. Then she lifts it up with her legs and turns it over, so that it lies with its face turned to the sky. And again she mumbles a few words, and then lays the child out as it was before, and belabours it afresh with the shoe. This she does for three days, at the uprising and the going-down of the sun, in the hope that the Jinn may be affrighted by the chastisement, and take to its heels. This is one of the treatments we call *sugun ō sāṭ*.

219. And here's another treatment of the same kind. If a child tosses sleepless on its bed or starts screaming in its sleep, it's clear a Jinn has scared it out of its wits. So the womenfolk gather round it, and soothe it as best as they may. And when at last it falls off to sleep, they get three lumps of live charcoal and fill a cup with water. And one holds the cup over the child's heart, and another takes up a lump of charcoal with a pair of tongs, and turns it round the child's head, saying: "*Tursō! tursō! tursō!*" Then she drops the charcoal into the cup of water. Likewise she takes up the other two lumps one by one, and turns them round the child's head, and pops them in the water. And the cup is left by the bedside till the child wakes, and then is thrown away. This they

Another *sugun* treatment.

do thrice for three nights running. Now *turs* in the Balōchī tongue means "fear." And the women think that in this wise they draw out the fear that is in the child, and make it pass into the live charcoal and so die away, even as the live charcoal dies away when it is plunged into water.

Other devices.

220. But if all will not do, the poor mother goes off to a mulla, to wheedle out of him some charm or amulet. And first he asks her when and where and how the calamity befell her child. And when he has asked many another shrewd question, he peers ever so gravely into his book. And likely enough, he will tell her to go home again, and come back with such and such a thing: seven kinds of grain maybe, or some raw flesh, or a hen that is black or white or speckled, or a strip of cloth as long as her child. So off she goes, and gets together whatsoever the mulla commanded her. But before she brings it back to the mulla, she takes good care to pass it thrice round the child's head, that the calamity may pass into it. So she presents it humbly to the mulla, but with never a word, you may be sure, of the cunning thing she has done. And the mulla in return gives her an amulet, and this advice to boot: that she should light an earthen lamp at some mosque for three nights running, on a Wednesday, a Thursday, and a Friday.

Kill or cure—belief in the Jinns deepens.

221. Well, time alone can show whether the child will recover or whether it will die. But either way the womenfolk will be the more assured of the awesomeness of the Jinns. For if it recover, the old crone and the mulla will pride themselves mightily on their dominion over the Jinn. And if it die, both will wag their heads ever so wisely: didn't they know it all along? never in all their born days had they encountered so perverse a spirit! careless indeed must the mother have been to allow it to get so firm a foothold in her child; 'twas only to soothe the poor soul—little though she deserved it—that they had made a show of fighting the Jinn at all.

And the womenfolk go home thrilled to their very marrow. For months they can talk of nothing else but the sad fate of the poor little mite, that was done to death by so powerful a Jinn. And I warrant it's a shrewd eye they keep on their own children ever after.

Women the chief victims.

222. But there's no lodging that a Jinn likes better than the body of a young woman. Indeed there's many a man that has never lived in wedlock with his wife, all because some Jinn has fallen in love with her, and smites him to the earth whenever he seeks to come nigh her. Aye, and I have heard of a woman who bitterly complains that a Jinn is forever lying with her; there's no mistake about it, says she, for she feels her body pricking all over. Well, well, this is as may be. Wild folk, to be sure, have wild fancies. But so much is certain: womenfolk have more to fear from Jinns than all the world beside. Hence it is that a woman should never venture abroad by herself in the days of her weakness when she's great with child or has just brought a child to the birth, lest an evil spirit pounce on her unawares. Now as soon as a Jinn enters within her, she falls to the ground, poor thing, in a dead faint, shivering and trembling, with eyes fast shut, with teeth clenched, and arms and legs flung this side and that. And for the space of an hour or more she can utter never a word, and is deaf to the cries of her sorrowing kin. By these signs we know full well that a Jinn has got the mastery over her, and our one thought is to summon some holy man who shall drive the evil spirit forth.

A holy man is called in.

223. So a mulla or a Sayyad hastens to the house. And first he reads from the Holy Writ, or recites in the Arabic tongue the many names of the Almighty, that the poor woman may be strengthened with comfort. But if her tongue is still unloosened, he reads his beads, and takes up his books, and writes down a charm we call *dūdī*, or smoke-charm; for he sets thereto a light and holds it before her face, that the smoke thereof may pass

up into her nostrils. Then will her tongue verily be loosened and fall a-babbling. And he calls upon the Jinn, saying: "Sir, wherefore hast thou taken hold of this poor lady? And what is thy need? I charge thee speak, or I will surely burn thee to ashes." And out of the maiden's mouth will the Jinn make answer, haply after this wise: "Grievous is the hurt that she has done me, in that she trampled on my child this very evening. And now that I am lodged herein, I will not budge, no! not I, until some blood has been given me." Or he may say that she mightily incensed him by passing his dwelling, day in, day out, all unwashed. Or he may change his tone and speak of his exceeding great love for her: were ever two peas more alike than she and his poor dead wife? from the hour he saw her bathing in the stream, he had longed for her unceasingly. But whatever he may say on this score or that, when all is said and done, blood is what he hankers after.

Driving the devil out with blood-sacrifice.

224. Forthwith the kin sacrifice a lamb or a kid, and fill a cup with the blood thereof, and set it at a distance from her that is possessed of the devil. And the mulla calls upon the Jinn to take the blood and be gone, and to give them some sure sign of his going. And the Jinn, please God, will go out of the woman without more ado. But at times he hedges round his going with terms and conditions: he will visit her but once a month, or maybe once a year; yet let her eat no beef nor the flesh of fowls, by the prophet Solomon, he will visit her no more. So he departs, and, sure enough, they often find that he has knocked over the cup of blood in token of his going. And the woman falls into a peaceful slumber. But by-and-by she awakes, and is all amazed to see the anxious crowd around her. Naught of what has passed does she know. So much she remembers and no more: that some monster caught hold of her of a sudden, and that she fled homewards more dead than alive. The rest is one blank.

225. Well, it's not for me to decry the skill of mulla and Sayyad in casting out devils. In truth the efficacy of their amulets and charms is the measure of their power among the people. But old-fashioned folks set more store by the Shēkh and his dancing. Now a Shēkh is not a member of any one tribe or race. You may come across one here and there all up and down the country. By his long, long hair you will know him, and his skill on instruments of music, and his power over the Jinns. Some Jinns he has forever under his spell, and with these to do his bidding he can win the mastery over others. And 'tis the Jinns, I'm thinking, who teach him how to read the future, and who whisper in his ear when he tells fortunes. The Shēkh, or devil-dancer.

226. So when some poor woman has been seized by a Jinn, and mulla and Sayyad maybe have failed to free her from his spell, we call in a Shēkh at dead of night. But first we gather together men who are cunning on the *sirōz* and the *dambūra*. And when the Shēkh enters the assembly where the woman is laid, the minstrels strike up a measure, and play right lustily. And as he listens to the strains, the Shēkh's limbs tremble beneath him; and he rocks to and fro, and his face is as the face of a man in agony. For the wild music breeds a madness within him, so that he becomes like one possessed. And lo! he starts to his feet, and dances madly, whirling round and round and ever round. And his long, long hair now floats in the air, and anon it sweeps the ground. On he dances, and the music grows yet more wild and the dance yet more crazy. And when he is so spent with his whirlings that the sweat drips from him in great drops, he cries aloud on Alī Bēzāt and Lākā and his other saints, to help him in this his hour of bitter stress. Devil-dancing.

227. Now while the frenzy is upon him, men and women gather round him eagerly—the old ladies foremost in the press—and question him touching this or that, bidding him prophesy: is it a boy or a girl that The ecstatic frenzy.

neighbour's wife will bear him? is there rain in the air? will father return this month or the next from his travels? and how will his business speed, for good or for ill? And to all their questions he will make answer, if so be the Jinns are in the humour to prophesy. And haply some old crone will totter forward with a blue thread in her hand, mumbling up many a prayer that a son may be vouchsafed her daughter, and will piteously entreat the Shēkh to tie a knot in the thread, that it may safeguard the child against the Jinns. And the Shēkh will tie the knot, sure enough, but a deal he will mutter of the sacrifices she must offer, and the rich presents she should give him. Then one in the company will cry out for sweetmeats; and all the assembly take up the chorus. So with a wild toss of the head, the Shēkh calls upon the Jinns, and lo! at a whisk of his hand sweetmeats come tumbling from the air. Or he takes an empty bowl and waves it aloft, and then shows it to the people all brimming with blood. And oftentimes he goes apart and talks aloud, as though he were holding communion with the spirits of darkness. And the hairs bristle on the heads of all that hear him. For 'tis in truth a gruesome thing to hear strange talk and weird sounds in the dead of night.

Driving out the devil.

228. And by-and-by the Shēkh returns to the assembly, and speaking like one who speaks in his sleep, he tells how he has wrestled long and manfully with the spirits of darkness. Maybe he will say that the Jinn must be appeased with the sacrifice of a he-goat or a ram of this colour or that. Or he will say there's nothing for it but *alēj*. Now *alēj* is a sacrifice that is made after this fashion. The beast must be slaughtered before the very eyes of her that is seized of the devil. And a little wool is soaked in its blood, and smeared on her hands and feet and forehead. But the flesh is cooked and served among the assembly. And so, please God, the devil is cast out for good and all.

229. But often enough it all begins over again before long, for some women seem never free from the Jinns. They are always flying into a rage and beating their faces and plucking out their hair, Heaven alone knows why. Nothing sets them off like the smell of roasting meat. So no one is surprised if a neighbour pops in when a joint is on the roast, and begs for a bit to soothe some Jinn-ridden woman next-door. But truth to tell, there are women so lost to shame as to put on the airs of one that is possessed of a devil, and all to compass some private end. One, I dare say, has a grudge to pay off against her husband. Another may fancy that folk will eye her with reverence when they know that she is in league with the Jinns. But of such idle women, and their tantrums, and the airs they put on, and the nuisance they are, I will say naught. The Jinns are of a surety a dread and awesome company. Trouble enough do they give us, and small's the need to add thereto trouble that is mockery and vanity. Recurring cases and shamming.

DEATH

Signs of death's approach.

230. Now when a man is stricken low with sickness, the grey-heads of the family can often see the shadow of death full three days before its grim approach. For if his nose droop to one side, or tears dribble from one of his eyes, they make ready for the worst, and send betimes to a neighbouring village for a mulla to read chapters from the Korān. But if the sick man can no longer move his tongue, and if he gape at his kin as though he knew them not, the mulla is like to come too late for aught but the burial. For by these signs old folk know that the soul is passing away. And silently they set about them to gather the wherewithal for the funeral meats, but hide their errand from those that are nearest and dearest to him that soon will be no more.

The death.

231. And when life has departed, we drive the womenfolk from the chamber, wife and mother and all. None but the nearest kinsmen may stay by the dead. But from the death-chamber of a woman all the men are barred. The husband, above all, may not look upon the face of his dead. For many and heavy are the rights of a husband over a wife. And should he look upon her face, haply the desire might enter his soul that she should arise and do such and such a thing. There she would lie, helpless to do his bidding, and her helplessness maybe would be accounted unto her for sin. And if a child be sick unto death and the end be nigh, they lift it from the mother's lap. Forth must she go, poor thing! nor may she look on her loved one more, lest she rob it of peace at the last. And though the other women weep silently, she must surely check her

grief. For from every tear she sheds will spring a pool to block the path that her little one must travel.

Preserving a dead man's luck.

232. Now if a man has been lucky in this world above his fellows, we rub a silver coin on his forehead, as soon as he sighs forth his last gasp. For the luck that has been his in life passes thereby into the coin, and will surely cleave to his children and children's children, as long as the coin is treasured up in the household.

Laying out the body of a man.

233. Forthwith the near kinsmen close the dead man's eyes with their hands. And on each eye they lay a ball of cotton, and keep the cotton in place with a strip of rag bound about the temples. And they place a hand under the chin to shut fast his mouth; and round head and chin they bind a rag to keep it from gaping anew. His legs they stretch out to their full length, and lay his arms across his middle, with hands folded. The big toes they tie together with a rag, and likewise the thumbs. And if hands or feet are begrimed, straightway they cleanse them. And they pare the nails of hands and feet, and shave the hair about the privy parts, and change the apparel. For great is the disgrace, should the body not be laid out decently and in order, or eyes or mouth be left open.

Laying out the body of a woman.

234. And in the death-chamber of a woman the womenfolk do the like to their dead. Eyes and mouth are fast shut; limbs are stretched out; nails are pared; grime is washed off hands and feet. But the hair about her middle do they not shave. And they clothe her body in fine apparel, and deck it out with brave ornaments, for all the world as if she were faring forth to a wedding.

Anointing those in the prime of youth with henna.

235. And in the old days they would anoint with henna, as though for a bridal, the hands and feet of man or woman cut off in their prime, in token that death had come upon them before the fulness of their days, or ever they had drunk deep of the sweet joys of this world. But the custom is on the wane, and it's

only in noble houses and among the well-to-do you will now see the like.

Sending out for the shroud.

236. On the belly of the dead we lay an iron bar to keep down the swelling, for the mulla may be late in coming. And by the head we place a pot of rice, or, if needs must, of wheat or other grain. And the pot is the portion of him or her that shall by-and-by wash the body for the burial. And in haste we send for a shroud from the village. Though there be cloth in plenty in the house, yet will we not use it, or death will surely take to itself another victim from among the household.

Summoning the friends.

237. Now when the dead has been meetly laid out, and the task of the kin is o'er, they raise the sad cry, "His work is done! He has surrendered himself to God!" But when the neighbours hear it, they sit for a while and do not stir abroad. For they know full well that some ill will befall the man that answers the first summons of death. And those that live hard by hasten to fling all their water out of doors. For as soon as the Angel of Death has done his dread task, he washes his fatal sword in their houses as he passes on, and woe to the man or woman that tastes of the waters of death! Not until they have heard the cry again and yet again, do they come together to the house. But first they send out messengers to carry the pitiful news to the kith and kin who live afar off. For this is their task and not the task of the stricken family. And the messengers go forth, and in the ear of the eldest of each household they whisper: "He has surrendered himself to God."

The gathering of the friends.

238. So the kith and kin forgather in the house of sorrow. And silently they greet one another and the heirs of the dead. Or if they speak, they speak in whispers. But the women sit apart and do not weep aloud or mourn, till the body is carried forth to the graveyard.

Removing the body

239. Now when the mulla is come and the shroud is in readiness, we bear the body from the house to the

tan-shōd, or place of washing. And on the spot where the head of the body lay, there we set an exceeding heavy stone, in the hope that the dead may be acceptable to God nor draw another into the valley of death. Howbeit for a little child no stone is set. from the house.

240. But with some folks there's a plaguey to-do about moving the body from the house. Have I spoken somewhat already touching the Star, I wonder, and how the wild folk of the hills, aye and many others more also, account it the worst of ill-luck to follow after it? Well, when a man dies, it's not long before they bethink them of the whereabouts of the Star. And if the door of the house or tent be towards the south, and if it be the third or fourth day of the new moon, it's clear as clear can be that they can't get the body out by the door that day, for the Star like the door is then towards the south. So there's nothing for it but to break through the wall that is over against the door, and to carry the body out through the breach. This is bad enough in all conscience, but it's worse to have to keep the body above-ground on the ninth or the nineteenth or the twenty-ninth, and all because the Star is then underground. Consulting the Star.

241. If there's a running stream in the village, folk carry the body thither, and pile up a fire and set water on the boil. For warm water must be used for the washing of the dead. And in the water they put some leaves of the *bēr*, or wild plum-tree, if they have any in the house. And the body is laid on a wooden plank, such as are kept in the mosque against this sad day. But away in the hills they lay the body on matting made of dwarf-palm or other green leaves, for planks they have none. And the body is curtained off. Now if it be the body of a male, all depart save only the mulla and two of the nearest kinsmen. And the mulla strips the dead of its clothes, and round its middle he ties a white loin-cloth, and falls a-washing the body. Three jugs of water he uses at the washing; but the head he cleanses with clay. The washing of the body of a male.

And he anoints the body with rose-water and sweet-smelling spices; yet the poor will rest content with sprinkling face and armpits with pounded camphor. Then he wraps the body in a shroud. And when his task is done, the kinsmen lift the body in their hands and lay it on a bedstead. And underneath they spread a clean quilt, that it may lie in comfort. But in the hills they have perchance no bedstead. So they lay the body on a *manjav*, or hurdle, meetly covered with green leaves.

The washing of the body of a female.

242. But the washing of the body of a woman is the task of the womenfolk. The mulla's wife should see to it by rights, albeit any pious old lady may take her place. And the kinswomen and neighbours busy themselves with fetching the water and setting it to boil. Now when the body is brought to the place of washing and all is in readiness, they curtain it off. Most of the womenfolk stand without, but a few remain within to aid the mulla's wife at her task. And she washes the body after the selfsame fashion as the mulla washes the body of a man. Yet the head she washes with water in which the stumps and leaves of the *lāṛa*, or soda plant, have been boiled. Howbeit those that have no *lāṛa* will make shift with the washing clay. The hair is unplaited and left to hang down in front. The clothes are stripped off the body, and so are the ornaments, save maybe a ear-ring, which the well-to-do will surely leave in token of the love they bear the dead. To the washing comes the female *ḍōmb*. And in Kalāt and Mastung, while the womenfolk are busied over their task, she sings the funeral song: "*Halō! hālō! zahrēn halō!*" For the funeral song is *zahr*, or bitter, even as the wedding song is *vash*, or sweet. And as soon as she has sung a line, the womenfolk sing it after her, making sad music. But nomads to be sure and other poor folk do their work in silence.

The washing of the

243. So the washing of the body of a man is done by the mulla, and the washing of the body of a woman by

the mulla's wife. But the body of a child we entrust to an old man or an old lady for the washing, according as it is the body of a boy or a girl. And if it be a tiny mite less than three years old, we lay it on a shield. An older child is carried forth to the graveyard in our hands, but one that is past seven is laid out on a bedstead or a hurdle like a full-grown man or woman. body of a child.

244. And when the body has been washed and is laid out, the men and women and grown-up children of the kin are bidden to come one by one and take their last look at the dead. But on the face of a dead woman no man may look save a son or a father or a brother and others of her blood. A husband, above all, may not join the throng. Nor may a lady that is great with child look upon the dead, lest her babe be stricken with *badalō* even in the womb, or be born out of due time. And if there's a mother to mourn the dead, they call upon her thrice to forgo the milk-dues and other mother-dues that are hers by right, and sadly she makes answer: "Freely do I bestow them all." Thrice is she bidden to forgo her dues, and thrice does she sob out her answer in this wise. *Padīkō dūdār*, the last look.

245. And in olden days it was the custom for the kinsfolk and men of rank to spread robes of honour and pieces of cloth over the body as it lay in state. The Khān himself was wont to pay this honour to one who had done him true and loyal service. By the hand of a servant he would send a strip of brocade or a shawl or other robe of honour, the value thereof being apportioned to the rank of him that was dead. And the chiefs and the headmen would show like honour, each in his order: first the Khān, then the chief, and after them the kinsmen, each giving according to his means and the rank of the dead. And as the robes were laid on the body, some old and reverend gentleman would take his stand close by, and cry aloud, yet in a voice broken with grief: "This is the robe of honour sent by the Khān! This is given by the chief! This by the *Tān shāghing*, covering the body with robes of honour.

father! And this by the brother!" And the more the robes of honour, the greater the honour shown to the dead. As far as the graveyard were they taken with the body, and there given to the mulla. But the custom is now going the way of all too many customs of the good old days.

Waiting for the arrival of absent kin.

246. All is now ready for the burial. Howbeit if one of the near kin is abroad and is looked to return within the space of a night and a day, we build a mosque that the body may rest therein. For a mosque, you must know, is made in the twinkling of an eye. Set some stones in a ring, with a small arch to the west and an opening to the east, and it's done. Of such mosques every roadside in the country is full. And in a mosque the body lies till the absent kinsman comes and takes his last look at the face of the dead. And while it remains above-ground, folk watch over it, nor ever leave it alone. Some think that evil spirits would scare it if no one were looking. Others say that the place where it lies would be haunted thereafter. Yet in a mosque methinks there's no fear of one or other.

Salām mōn tining, sending messages to the shades by the dead.

247. And when the time is come to carry the body to its last abode, many folks there be who will not suffer it to depart without a greeting to the shades that have gone before. Haply some mother who has long since lost her son will draw nigh, and whisper her message in the ear of the dead: "Heart of mine, give my dear boy, I prithee, my sweet greeting and this my message. Fondly have we yearned for him many's the weary day. But now shall we make no long tarrying, for soon must we travel the selfsame road. Grant us therefore the help of thy prayers for the Faith's sake." Among the menfolk the custom is dying out, even in the hills. Yet women would surely be loth to forgo a greeting to their dear ones. And if the dead be a woman, many are the messages of love that are whispered in her ear.

BURIAL

248. But all the while strong men from among the kin and neighbours have been toiling in the graveyard. Now every family, or at the least every group of tribesmen, has its own graveyard where they bury their dead. And great is their disgrace if a man is not laid to rest among his fathers. To be sure, if they bury their dead near the shrine of some saint, 'tis piously done. But who would be one of the *gharīb-gōr*, or lonely dead, buried in an alien land, with no kin to bear him company? The graveyard.

249. And the grave must be dug before dusk, for it would never do to bury a body at night. Some say that the dead would curse his kin that took him from the house in the dark. But others say the dead that lie already in the graveyard would be disturbed, should another be brought by night to bear them company, and would call down God's wrath on the disturbers. Be it as it may, any woman will tell you that those that bury their dead by night do so at their peril. Jinns will surely meet them on their way to the grave, and will scare one of their number out of his wits and peradventure out of his life. Burial must be by day.

250. Now villagers bury their children in graves two feet deep at the least; but the older the child the deeper the grave. But those who live in the hills and other wild folk lay them in caves or on the shelves of ancient vaults beyond the reach of ravening beasts. Or if they bury them—for the old customs are truly dying out—they bury them in shallow graves, and cover them ever so lightly with earth. For graves, they say, are for those who have lived their life and sinned their sins. But the Burial of children.

little innocents have no need of graves, for they are *bihishtī* and *bihisht* or Paradise is their home. Nay rather, they should be left free and unfettered to speed their flight into the presence of the Almighty on the Day of Judgment to entreat His pardon for the sins of their fathers. A pious thought this methinks, and as wise as pious. But whether there's wit in their belief that a mother whose babe lies imprisoned deep below the earth will live childless for the rest of her days, I am hard put to it to say.

The *kabr*, or grave.

251. The grave of a man should reach to a man's middle, but the grave of a woman should reach to a man's breast. And if folks find the earth soft and yielding as they dig, 'tis a sign that the dead is pleasing to God. But if the ground is hard and stubborn, or if they come upon rock, they are affrighted. For 'tis a sign that the earth is loth to take to its bosom a burden so sinful. And they hide the thing for very shame from the heirs of the dead. Yet it passes from mouth to mouth in scared whispers, and those that hear of it mutter a prayer for God's mercy.

The *lahd*, or shelf.

252. Now when they have dug a grave from north to south, on the western side thereof they hollow out a shelf. It must be the length of the dead and a little more, and two feet across and two feet high, for herein is the body laid. And though this task is done, they must still look about them for big stones to block the mouth of the shelf, and for slabs to raise over the grave. And it may take time to find them. Yet the mulla has haply stored plenty and to spare in the mosque against this woeful day. Hill folk, God wot, have never far to seek for their stones.

Carrying the body to the grave.

253. And when all is at last ready, four of the kin raise the bier on their shoulders and set out for the graveyard; but a husband, you may be sure, does not lay hands on the bier of his wife. And the going is slow and solemn. Three paces they carry their sad burden, and then rest it on the ground for the space of a minute.

Again they lift it up and go three paces, and again they set it down. Yet a third time do they act in this wise, and then step forward in real earnest. And those that follow after recite the *kalima* of the true Faith all the way. Nevertheless they do not shirk their share in the labour, but take their turn every few paces to bear the bier. And each first shoulders the front leg of the bedstead on the left, and then goes to the left leg at the back, and thereafter to the right leg in front, and so again to the rear. And when he has gone the round, he is free for a breathing-space. And the greater the burden he has to bear, the greater his comfort, for it is unto us a sign that God has looked down with mercy upon His servant, who has departed this life in His faith and fear. And if the bier gives way, or if one of the legs breaks, we are the more assured that the sins of the dead have been forgiven him.

Zarafshān kanning, showering coins over the body.

254. And in the Khān's family and among other nobility like the Iltāzei and the chiefs, silver coins and pieces of gold we call *butkī* are showered over the body as it is carried forth to the burial. The custom is dying out; yet you may still see hundreds of coins scattered by one of the kin or some trusty servant at a stately burial. And beggars gather around from far and near, and scramble greedily with lads and lasses for the coins up to the very entry to the graveyard.

Numāz-janāza, the burial prayer.

255. And when the company are come to the graveyard, the mulla offers up the *numāz-janāza*, the prayer for the dead. And if the grave is not yet ready to welcome the dead, they sit them down and wait, reciting verses from the Holy Writ. But so long as the body remains above ground, they say never a word to the stricken family.

Laying the body in the *lahd*.

256. Then two or maybe three of the kinsmen—but not the next-of-kin—carry the body in their hands to the grave. But a husband may not carry the body of his wife; nor may he touch it or look upon the face. And be it body of man or woman, they lay it in the shelf

of the grave, with head to the north and feet to the south. And under the head they lay a few stones for a pillow, and turn the face to the west. But first they uncover the eyes of the dead that the dead may have a peep at its resting-place. Then the mulla takes two stones, and with the one he scratches the *kalima* on the other, and lays it before the face of the dead, that the dead may read the holy words and make meet answer to the two Angels that shall by-and-by come to hold their dread questionings. Howbeit for one who is still a child no *kalima* is needed. Then they cover the face over lightly. And they block the mouth of the shelf with stones and plaster it over. And back into the grave they shovel the earth, so that the mound rises somewhat above the ground.

Shakkī, or tomb-stones.

257. And on the mound they set up two long stones we call *shakkī*, one at the north and one at the south; but for a female a third is set midway betwixt the two. And the higher a man's rank, the higher should be the stones set on his grave. Nay, be a man's rank never so humble, those that loved him well will rear in his honour as lofty stones as they can find. In some parts like Zahrī, to be sure, long slabs of stone there are none, and even the greatest must needs rest content with lowly stones on his grave. And here and there no stones are used at all. And in Māshkai and Ornāch you may see branches of palm stuck up instead.

Protecting the grave.

258. And between the stones they tie a strip of rag torn from the shroud, in the humble hope that as the wind blows it to and fro, God may look down with compassion and blot out the sins of him that lies underneath. But hill-folk strew pebbles over the grave. For they say that a pebble, so long as it is not crushed, has life in it, and to boot a holy life, spent in one long prayer to God. Small wonder, then, that those who believe such things lay their dead to rest under a coverlet of prayers. And if the ground be soft, thorn

bushes must be set round the grave to ward off ravening beasts and above all the *gōr-paṭ**, the grave-digger, that beast bigger than a cat yet smaller than a dog, that battens on the bodies of the dead. For forty days are the bushes kept round the grave, and are then taken away.

Death away from home.

259. Now a death far from home is a plaguey troublesome business. And a man will think twice before setting out on a tramp with his household and all, if every man and woman and child be not hale and hearty. For if one of them sicken and die in an alien land, they must surely carry the body home, that it may rest at peace among its own kin. Nevertheless it may well be that they will have to bide their time. For if the season be hot, the body would rot and the stench be noisome. Or the homeward road may be long, and the food they brought with them be scant. Or their errand may be urgent and brook no delay.

Amānat (*anāmat*), or temporary burial on trust.

260. So where their dead dies, there they will dig a grave, and in it they will lay the body. And by-and-by they will return and bear it away. Now such a burial we call *anāmat*, or trust, for the body is as a trust committed to the earth. And the burial is in this wise. When they have dug the grave, shelf and all, they stand around it, and set a Korān in their midst. And the chief mourner calls the assembly to witness, saying: "Oh Musalmāns, hearken to my words, and be witness thereof! Thus do I deliver up my dead in trust to the flowering earth, and within six months—or whatever the term may be—do I vow to redeem it." Then three men step forward and lift the body in their hands. And the mulla, or some other reverend man, takes up the Korān, and cries aloud: "Be ye witness one and all, you Musalmāns, and you God's book, and you sun and heavens and angels. Be witness that even as the heavens above and the earth beneath and the whole

* Possibly a badger?

world are set firm in their God-appointed spheres, even so do I in the sight of all these deliver unto you, oh flowering earth, this dear pledge of mine! Verily within six months will I come and bear it away. But if I come not, then indeed is it yours to waste or to devour. But if, or ever the six long months are out, you despoil it, before God and before His Prophet I will surely demand of you in the Day of Judgment the price of your despoiling down to the last hair of his head." This he says thrice, and he turns to the assembly to bear him witness. And with one voice they reply: "Aye, we are witnesses indeed." Then they lay the body in the shelf of the grave; but before they close the mouth of the shelf, they cry thrice: "*Anāmat, salāmat!*"—safe bind, safe find. And if they have food and to spare with them, they will halt in that place for three days to hold mourning. Or they will turn their face back homewards, or set out once more on the road, and hold the mourning at their journey's end. Touching the stately mournings held for the dead, I will speak at large hereafter. But a mourning held for those that die on the march and are buried as a trust is no such lengthy matter. And poor folk do not bury children under twelve on trust at all, but lay them to rest in the place where they die.

Exhuming the body.

261. Now before the set time is out, the kin must surely return to redeem their trust. And if the land be dry and hot, six months in the grave will rid the body of its noisomeness. In a damp and cool land it should lie three months more. But you may be sure they thought all this out, before they set the time of trust. And with them they bring a new shroud and some sweet-smelling spices, and a sheep or a goat. And if they are well-to-do, they will bring with them a wooden coffin. Yet most folk are content with a bedstead; and some make shift with a hurdle made of branches. And when they are come to the spot, they

open up the grave, and anxiously scan the face and limbs of the dead, to see whether the earth has been true to its trust. And if they find the nose maybe sunken in or the body wasted, they are sore afraid. For it betokens methinks that the dead sinned grievously in this life. But others there be who would read therein a sign that the end of the world is nigh.

Removing it for burial.

262. And they sprinkle the body with sweet-smelling spices and wrap it in a shroud, and place it on the bedstead or hurdle. But the sheep or goat they brought with them is straightway slaughtered, and its carcase is flung into the empty grave, and there buried. Then they bind the bedstead, body and all, to a camel, and set out homewards. Wheresoever they make a halt, they take the body down from the camel, and build a mosque, that it may pass the night therein. And when they are come to their journey's end, they lay it in the tribal graveyard to rest in peace. For the space of one day they hold mourning. And food is cooked and given in alms.

Burial of saints.

263. Saints who die a natural death are buried like other men. To be sure, if a saint leave behind him a request that he should be buried in his clothes, or that so-and-so should see to the washing of his body, or that his grave should be dug in such and such a place, we act according to his will, as though it were an order from God. Thus the holy saint Abdulla Shā of Bāghwāna died five years back in Shādādpur. And before he died, he bade his disciples wash his body, and wrap it in a shroud, and place it on a camel; and the camel they should suffer to go whithersoever it listed; but on the spot where it first knelt down, there they should bury his body. And, as the saint had commanded, so it fell out. For the camel set forth, and crossed the Kīrthar Range, nor ever halted for two days until it reached Fīrōzābād. Now this is accounted a miracle like to the miracles of the saints of old. For

Fīrōzābād is full eighty miles from Shādādpur. And in Fīrōzābād was the saint buried.

The graves of saints.

264. Now the grave of a saint is of the selfsame fashion as the graves of other men. Howbeit it is raised higher and plastered over with mud. And if we leave it open to the air, we set a wall around it. But if the saint was of great renown and his disciples many, we build a chamber over the grave. And at the head of the grave or the door of the chamber we set up a *lakkar*, or pole, and deck it with a flag. So all may know that 'tis a saint that lies beneath. And on the pole we hang a bell or two, and bells are hung from the lintel of the door, that all who come to worship at the shrine may set them a-ringing and warn the saint of their coming.

The sanctity of the shrines.

265. Right holy are these shrines, for the saints are held in great reverence. In such awe do the villagers of Ziārat near Kalāt hold the shrine of the virgin saint that is in their midst, that no bedstead may ever be used in the village. And they say that the unbeliever who slept on a bedstead would find bedstead on top of him before dawn broke. And some shrines there are, the tombs whereof are empty. For many saints of olden time did not die like other men, but vanished beneath the earth. And over the place where they vanished were their tombs set.

Offerings at a shrine.

266. Divers are the offerings you may see strewn about a shrine. There are horns maybe that a hunter has hung up as a thanksgiving for his luck in the chase, and tiny cradles left by glad mothers whose children have been snatched from death. And on the poles you may see flags and kerchiefs and tiny bags stuffed with the first shavings of the head, and tresses of hair left by women whom the saint has blessed with children, or the leading-string of a camel that some master of a caravan has offered up after his journey.

The *khwarda*

267. And at the head and the foot of the tomb there are two small mangers, wherein are kept some clods of

earth we call *khurda* or *khwarda*, touching which I have spoken before. And when the worshippers have done their worship, they take some earth from the mangers, and eat thereof, and bedaub their face and body withal. This they do to show reverence to the saint, and as a cure against disease. But woe betide the man that eats of the earth of a saint whose follower he is not, for the saint will verily be provoked to anger. Yet folk pay visits to every saint in the country, but of the earth in the manger may they not eat save at the shrine of their own saint. And when they take of the earth, they must leave an offering for the keeper of the shrine. in the mangers.

268. Now the man that dies for the Faith's sake is a *shahīd*, or martyr. Yet such martyrs are few among us, for we wait the coming of the *Māhdī*, when shall indeed come the time for martyrdom. But those that fight in tribal warfare and are killed on the field are accounted martyrs also, and as such are buried. For their bodies are not washed, nor are they wrapped in a shroud, but are buried in their clothes. And the rites of a martyr's burial and the fashion of his grave are the same as for the common dead, save that there is no *numāz-janāza*, nor is the *kalima* writ on a stone. But the body of a man that is mortally wounded in battle, yet lingers on and speaks to his folk before he die, is washed and furnished with a shroud. For who can tell what sinful thoughts may not have passed through his brain 'twixt his wounding and his death? Burial of a *shahīd*, or martyr.

269. Now 'tis a shameful thing to leave one's dead on the field of battle. Yet if the vanquished are driven off and perforce leave their dead behind, the victor will surely entreat the dead with honour, if so be he is a chief or a man of knightly courtesy. He will send his men forth to lay the dead on bedsteads and bring them before him. And he will bid them spread robes Honouring a slain foe.

of honour over the bodies and bear them off in state to their kinsmen.

Burial of limbs lost in battle.

270. And if a man lose a finger or a hand or other limb in the fight, it is of all things shameful should he leave it to lie unhonoured and unburied on the field. Cost it never so much, he must risk all to save it from the foe. For great is the disgrace should he not bear it from the field, that it may be washed and wrapped in a shroud and meetly buried in the graveyard. Nay, if one of your surgeons carve a limb off one of us, we bear it away and bury it after the same fashion.

Burial of adulterers.

271. As for wife and lover taken in adultery and done to death, there's precious little fuss made over their burial, you may be sure. Folks tie their bodies on camels or asses or bullocks, and bundle them off to the graveyard. There they fling them into pits, and cover them over with loose earth. In the clothes the sinners died in, are they buried; howbeit the woman is stripped of her ornaments. No winding-sheet swathes them, nor are they laid to rest in a shelf. Like dogs are their carcasses cast into the pits, unmourned and with never a prayer. Nay, some men will ban them from the tribal graveyard, so great is their wrath. And they dig pits for them far from the haunts of men, and there let them rot in their solitude.

MOURNING

272. And in their pit let us leave the sinners, and hie back to the graveyard, to watch the mourners as they gather for the last time round the grave of their dear dead. Solemnly the mulla recites from the Holy Book, and one and all lift up their hands in prayer, beseeching the Almighty to pardon the sins of the dead. Then they wend their way homewards. But once quit of the graveyard, they do not fare far, but sit them down in a ring. Leaving the grave.

273. For it's time for the *sargōrī*, or division of funeral meats. Dates are commonly served out for this purpose; but those that live in villages furnish sweetmeats or loaves in their stead. The dates or sweets are set in readiness by the stricken household before they go forth to the burial. And while the last sad rite is being performed, they are brought silently from the house and laid out near the graveyard. But among the Mēngal and others of Jhalawān who have neither sweets nor dates, some of the kith and kin run to their flocks as soon as the body is carried forth for the burial, and each takes a sheep or goat from his flock. For a male the number of sheep and goats must be odd; for a female it must verily be even. And the beasts are slaughtered near the graveyard and the flesh roasted forthwith. And when the company issue from the graveyard, the funeral meats are served out, each man getting no more, no less, than his neighbour. The roast flesh is eaten then and there. But as for sweets and dates, it rests with each to do therewith as he please—to eat his share where he sits, or to take it home. *Sargōrī*, or distribution of the funeral meats.

Taking leave of the next-of-kin.

274. Then they make their way to the house of sorrow. Here a room or a tent has been set apart, strewn with carpets and rugs. All enter in. The next-of-kin to the dead sits him down in a corner, and the company sit them down over against him. And they greet him with the usual greetings, as though they were new-comers that had not yet seen him that day. And he answers greeting with greeting in the selfsame fashion. Then a greybeard or some man of rank in their midst lifts up his voice and says: "Bow yourself to the will of God!" or "May God forgive him!" And the next-of-kin makes answer: "Aye, God forgive him indeed!" or "God's will be done!" Then each in turn comforts the next-of-kin in like fashion, and for his greater comfort they dub him "*Mīr*," or "Sir." For be a man never so humble in rank, due honour must be shown him this day. And to one and all he makes answer: "God's will be done!" or "God forgive him indeed!" And after they have sat there a while, they arise, and lifting up their hands, they pray for the eternal peace of the dead. So they depart, making way for others that come to offer their comfort. But before they enter their own houses, their womenfolk will surely see to it that they wash their face, and shake the dust off their shoes. For though the men may think light of it, the womenfolk fear death or calamity if one comes in from a burial with unwashed face or dusty shoes.

Fātiha or *patar*, the mourning among the men.

275. But the next-of-kin to the dead sits on in the house of sorrow as *fātiha-khwāja*, or chief mourner, with the stricken family around him, to hold the mourning, or *fātiha*, which those of Jhalawān call *patar*. And by his side sits an old friend of the family who shall support him in his sad task. And when the neighbours are come, and *salām alaikum* and *v'alaik* have been uttered, one and all sit them down. And they lift up their hands and whisper prayers for the peace of the departed. Then some greybeard among the neighbours bids the

next-of-kin bow himself to God's will. And he greets the stricken ones in turn, asking after their health and welfare. And having done this yet again, he heaves a deep sigh of sorrow.

Exchange of news.

276. Then up speaks the old friend of the family, calling upon the new-comers to give their *hāvāl* or news. And the greybeard—with a "By your good leave" to his comrades—makes answer in this wise on behalf of one and all: "The mercy of God, the safety of the Faith, and your well-being, for all these do we pray. Of this sad happening have we heard, and have hurried hither to pay our respects to our honoured friend. No other news have we. All else is well." And "God grant him His peace!" is the reply. Then with a heavy sigh the greybeard greets the stricken ones, and begs the old friend of the family for the news. And the old friend makes answer in the selfsame way touching the mercy of God, the safety of the Faith, and their well-being. "Here we are seated," he goes on, "to mourn with our honoured friend in his dire calamity; and God has brought you to us. All else is well." And greetings go the round once more. But in Jhalawān they cut the news short with "By God's grace, there are no new tidings. All's well." As for the folk of Kalāt and the neighbourhood, they don't give and take the news at all.

Describing the end.

277. Then the greybeard turns to the mourners and asks touching the last illness of the dead. So they tell how he suffered and lingered, and how they hoped against hope, until at the last he gave up the ghost. And the talk turns to other matters, for the neighbours strive to cheer the stricken family. And so they take their leave.

Avalshām, or *langarī*, the first meal after the burial.

278. But some stay behind to break food in the house of mourning. Now so long as the body remains above ground, never a morsel may pass the lips of the stricken family. Nor for three full days after the death may any food be cooked in the house. Verily it would be unclean. Moreover in these three days there's such a

deal to be done, there would be little enough time for the cooking of food. Hence it is that the kith or kin must see to the feeding of the mourners. So when the body is carried forth to the burial, another household of the kindred makes ready a meal. Now this meal they of Sarāwān call *aval-shām*, or the first evening; but in Jhalawān it's called *langaṛī*, or fasting. Yet there's little fasting in the matter. For one sheep or goat at least is slain, whatever the sex of the dead; howbeit no blood is spilt over a dead child that has not shed its first teeth. And if a large company is gathered together, three sheep or goats are slaughtered or maybe five; for their number must be odd, not even. From the flocks of the stricken family they should not be taken; but Heaven knows, the wild men of the hills care little one way or the other. And for every beast that is slaughtered, they take forty pounds of wheaten flour, and bake bannocks for the meal.

Dū shēf kanning, lowering hand to food at a mourning.

279. And when all is in readiness, one of the kin steps up to the *fātiha-khwāja*, or chief mourner, and would fain wash his hands. For it were ill done, should the washing of the hands of the chief mourner and the guests of honour at a funeral feast be left to serving-men. But the chief mourner with a sigh waves him aside: please let him wash the hands of the others first; as for himself, he has no heart to eat. Then some man of rank catches him by the wrist and bids them pour water over his hands: what! would he starve, and fight with God Himself? So with a heavy sigh the chief mourner suffers them to do their will. And all the guests wash their hands after him. Then the food is brought in. But the chief mourner brushes the food aside, nor will he touch it. So the man of rank again takes him by the wrist and draws his hand to the platter. And the chief mourner gulps down a few small morsels with many a bitter sigh. And all in the room partake of the food. Now this custom we call *dū shēf kanning*, or lowering hand to

food, and those that share in the meal will say: "We lowered hands this day at so-and-so's house of mourning." And the selfsame scene is enacted apart among the women.

Avoiding attendance at an *aval-shām*.

280. But there's an idea abroad that one should not join in these burial feasts too freely. For the women say that it will bring death into one's own house before long. And those that are suffering from fever will be the first to make their excuses and stay away, lest their fever wax in strength or be ousted by a fever still more grievous. Hence but few, and those the near kin and the dear friends of the dead, stay behind for the *aval-shām*.

Kōnt harfing, rolling up the rug of mourning.

281. For full three days do the kith and the kinsmen come and sit and mourn; howbeit for a child that has not shed its first teeth, one day may suffice for the mourning among the men. But on the afternoon of the third day they come a-visiting for the last time. And they speak to the chief mourner words of comfort and wisdom: death must come to one and all, come it soon or come it late; a truce then to mourning; let him bear himself like a man, and be up and about his worldly business. Long do they entreat him, and at the last he gives way and arises and quits the room. Thereupon one of the neighbours rolls up a corner of the rug on which he was seated, in token that the mourning is over, and that the mourners now go about their business. A chief will surely send a son or some other to roll up the rug in the house of one of his tribesmen. And in Kalāt itself the Khān will send one of his servants or a headman to pay this honour in the house of one who has done him true and loyal service. And if the graveyard be close by, the chief mourner wends his way thither with a few of the kith and kin. And standing by the grave they lift up their hands, beseeching God's blessing and praying for the peace of the dead. So they go each man to his own home, and the mourning among the men is over.

Varagh or *sci-shām*, the death-feast given by the bereaved.

282. On the morrow the stricken family make ready a feast in their house. Sheep and goats are slaughtered, as many as their means can afford. Yet their number should be odd, just as the number of sheep and goats slain for a wedding-feast should surely be even; howbeit some folks of Jhalawān say that for a male dead the number should be odd, and for a female even. And they call the serving-women and others to come with their iron pans and sit and bake bread the whole day long. And they summon the mulla and the kith and the poor and the needy to the feast. So they come and eat their fill, the men together and the womenfolk apart.

Purs, or the offerings made at visits of condolence.

283. Thus at last is food cooked in the house of sorrow. For three full days have the mourners and their visitors eaten naught save that which was furnished by the kith and kin and cooked in other houses. But those that live at a distance bring in a kid or a lamb or a rupee or two, or maybe more, to help the chief mourner, when they come to offer him comfort; for a death brings heavy losses in its train. Methinks one who came with empty hands would touch nothing of the food in the house, whether it were furnished by the kinsmen or the stricken family. And tribesmen who come in a body will together offer a sheep or the like, when they come on their errand of comfort. And one of the company will keep a careful tally of the offerings, that the chief mourner may know what he should offer in return, when death in time shall enter the houses of others. This is the custom we call *purs*. It is known throughout the length and breadth of the country. Even the chiefs pay *purs* to the Khān of Kalāt, the Raisānī and the Shāwānī paying one hundred rupees and one over, and the rest in the order of their rank. And the Khān makes due return. Yet folk who herd together in Kalāt and Mastung and other townships are giving up *purs* like many another good old custom. For in the townships men of one tribe live higgledy-piggledy with men

of another: nay, they rub shoulders with folk that are not tribesmen at all. In Jhalawān the custom is common everywhere. But, alas! it is growing out of all knowledge. For the chiefs have twisted it to their own selfish uses. As soon as death enters the house of a chief, he sends his servants abroad among his tribesmen, more especially among such as pay him tribute, to gather in the *purs*, not as a mark of sympathy offered graciously, but by force as the rightful due of the strong. And what is yet worse, the chief forgets all too often to make return when death stalks among his tribesmen. Thus have our good old customs gone awry, on such evil days are we fallen.

Mōn shāghing, or veiling the face among the women.

284. Now the womenfolk make much to-do over their mourning. As soon as the dead is carried forth to the burial, a room is set apart for the sorrowing ladies of the house. They sit in a row, and in their midst sits the nearest of the kin, as *mātan-gōdī*, the mistress of the mourning. And when the ladies of the neighbourhood come in to offer comfort, the kinswomen do not rise, nor do they greet them, but cover their faces with their head-dress. And the neighbours sit them down, and cover their faces in like fashion, weeping and wailing.

Mōda, or dirges.

285. And songs in praise of the dead are sung. *Mōda* we call them. Doleful dirges they are, full of grief and mournful sounds, so that tears flow from every eye; howbeit the dirges are all in the Balōchī tongue. And if it be a male for whom they mourn, they lament him in song as the bravest of his time, the most comely of his race with his raven locks and his raven beard; as one who stood by the fatherless and the widow, a cheerful giver to the poor and needy, and a bountiful host to all who came as guests. As the staunch rider of a fleet bay steed they praise him, notwithstanding that never in his life did he throw leg over the sorriest of nags. And if they mourn for maid or matron, they sing the praises of her long black tresses, and of her countenance as fair as

the pale face of the moon; though her hair maybe was scant, and her face as black as pitch. So they lament, and cease not from their sad dirges for a goodly space.

Unveiling the face.

286. Then some dame of reverend age and rank entreats the mistress of the mourning, saying: "Mistress, uncover now your face, we beseech you. God's mercy rest on your dead, the untimely dead, and may long life be the portion of those that are left behind. But as for those that are gone, in truth they are gone whence there is no return, weep you never so pitifully. Nor are these your sad tears acceptable unto God. Uncover then your face, for it is meet and right to bow yourself to His will." And the mistress of the mourning makes answer, saying: "Not for him do I weep, but for myself and the sad days that are mine. For he has gone hence and found peace. But me he has left to my anguish, and his sons has he made wanderers on the face of the earth." Then the old dame lifts the veil from the face of the mistress of the mourning, and all in the room lay their head-dress aside.

Lamentations for the dead.

287. So they wipe the tears from their eyes. And the old dame turns to the mistress of the mourning, saying: "Mistress mine, is it well with you and with yours? May I be your sacrifice!" And the mistress of the mourning makes answer in the selfsame words. Then the other lifts up her voice in lamentation: "Alas! for his youth," she wails, "alas! a hundred times alas for his untimely end, cut off from the living before the fulfilment of his purpose!" And the mistress of the mourning sobs out: "Heart of mine, lo! he is gone and is at rest. But I—what can I do for all my grief? Broken is my heart, and my tears spring forth unbidden. Yet what do they avail? Die I cannot." Then the two fall a-talking of the illness and the last words and the end of it all. And the others chat together in whispers of this or that, but with never a laugh or a smile.

Fixing the period of mourning.

288. But by-and-by their voices are hushed as other neighbours come in. And the veiling of the face and the droning of dirges begin anew. And so it goes on till the evening. But before they depart, one of the neighbours turns to the mistress of the mourning, saying: "Dear lady, no one, I ween, has yet prayed God to bestow sorrow upon him. But when sorrow comes, 'tis meet to face it with a stout heart. Moreover we must needs bow to the way of the world. Tell us then the period you set for the *mātan*, or mourning, and the day you appoint for the washing of the head." Thereupon the mistress of the mourning lifts up her voice, railing against new times and new customs. And the other presses her yet the more to set a limit to the mourning. For a while she will hear none of it, but babbles of the good old days and the love she bore her dead. Yet at the last she gives way. "Friends!" she sobs, "the light of my eyes has been taken from me, and sorrow will quit my sad heart nevermore. Ask what you will of me, and freely will I grant it. But for eleven livelong days will I hold full mourning, nor will I abate a day thereof." And so they depart, each lady going to her own home and noising abroad the number of days that have been set.

Modern tendency to cut down mourning.

289. Now according to good old custom, the terms of the full mourning among the womenfolk that is called *mātan* are these. Eleven days they mourn for a man cut off in his prime; for a woman they mourn nine. But if the dead go down to the grave in the fulness of years, the mourning is two days shorter. For a youth they mourn seven days, and for a maid five. For lads and lasses that have not passed over the threshold of childhood, they mourn two days less. Three days they mourn for tiny tots, or five maybe for a male child over three; but for such there is no covering of the face nor singing of dirges. For a babe of six days old they mourn one day. But as for a newborn babe, they mourn not at all. Such are the periods according to

bygone custom. But in these days the Mēngal and the Bīzanjav and other folk of lower Jhalawān think it enough to mourn even those cut off in their prime for three short days. But old ladies shake their heads sadly over the new-fangled fashion.

Drōt tōning, the kinsmen condole with the mistress of the mourning.

290. And when the sun is set and all the ladies of the neighbourhood have departed to their homes, the nearest kinsmen go to greet the mistress of mourning. And they find her sitting in despair, with head swathed round. But a serving-maid, or some lady of the kin, bids her arise, and lay her veil aside, and answer the greeting of her kinsmen. And so she does after a deal of tender pressing. And they speak to her words of comfort, and by-and-by they take their leave.

Dad tōming, or mourning by beat of drum.

291. And in high families, like the Ahmadzei and Iltāzei, it's an old custom, now dying out, to mourn by beat of drum. As soon as the body is laid in the grave, a *ḍōmb* is blindfolded and sent with his drum into the assembly of the women. Thither comes the mistress of the mourning with the ladies of the kin and her serving-maids and handmaids around her. Bareheaded, with head-dress flung back and bound round their middle, they stand in a ring. And the drummer takes his stand in their midst and beats a mournful roll on his drum. And in token of mourning the drum is dyed blue, even as it is smeared red with henna for a wedding jollity. As he beats the drum, a serving-maid lifts up her voice and wails out a dirge in praise of the dead. And when she has sung a verse, the mistress of the mourning and the ladies of the kin sing it after her, sobbing and wailing. And they clap their hands against their face and then against their thighs, and whirl around. And behind each lady stands a handmaid, holding her with both hands about the middle, lest she sink to the ground for grief. Three days do they thus mourn to the beat of the drum, unless maybe the mistress of the mourning give way to those who urge her to rest content with one

day's mourning, lest the Almighty wax wroth at their exceeding bitter lamentation. But the custom is dying out, and it's only in the Khān's family that it's likely to be heard of in these new-fashioned times. Yet I warrant it will live long on the tongues of angry women. For "May your drums turn blue!" is a taunt both bitter and common. One might as well say outright, "May your wedding-bed be your bier!"

Sarshōdī, the washing of the head.

292. Now during the days appointed for the full mourning, the mistress of the mourning and those that come to stay her with comfort change not their clothes, nor redden their lips, nor put antimony to their eyes. But when the last day of mourning is come, each brings to the assembly soap and washing clay and oil and a pound or two of wheat. And they sit in the house and weep and wail till noon. But some go apart and set the water a-boiling. And when all is in readiness, a reverend dame steps forward and with sweet words entreats the mistress of the mourning. "Dear lady!" she will say, "this time of trouble comes not to you alone. For the angel of Death stands knocking at the door of prince and beggar-boy alike. And the road whither he beckons, one and all must tread. God grant that the time of those that are yet young may be far, far off! But after all, we must follow the way of this sorry world. Arise, therefore, and wash your head." But the mistress of the mourning will surely seek to wave her aside, as though it were all too soon after the death of her loved one. But the other will catch her by the wrist and draw her with tender words of comfort to the courtyard. And there the mistress of the mourning will suffer her to unplait her hair, and wash her head with the washing clay, and comb her tresses. And by-and-by she will pluck up heart and comb her tresses herself.

Those who take part in it

293. Now when the old lady leads the mistress of the mourning forth for the *sarshōdī*, or washing of the head, she turns to the company, saying: "Who will wash her

head with the mistress of the mourning, who? But friends, we would drive no one against her will. For it is all a matter of graciousness and good fellowship. Yet the mistress has ever been foremost and right gracious in acts of fellowship, when weal or woe befell us. Step forward, then, all ye who would bear her company!" Now of the stricken family all the matrons will verily step forth, and one lady from each family of the near kin. But maidens and children are not suffered to join in the washing of the head, be their grief never so great, save maybe if the number of matrons be too small. So the women come forward and sit by the side of the mistress of the mourning, unplaiting their hair. But if their number be found to be even, yet another lady will surely come forward to join the throng. Or, if needs must, they will entreat one of the mourners ever so prettily to forgo the washing of the hair: 'twas kindly meant, and will never be forgotten; but she sees how matters stand; so please, won't she give way, and let the will be taken for the deed?

The ceremony.

294. So not until the number of the mourners is odd, do they unplait their hair and cleanse their heads with the clay. And the other ladies and the serving-maid help them with service. And the mistress of the mourning is given clean apparel, and walnut-bark to redden her lips withal, and antimony for her eyes, and oil for her hair. But all the while she seeks to thrust the things aside, and often has the old lady to catch her by the wrist, before she suffers herself to be decked out. And the mourners array themselves after the selfsame fashion.

Fixing the *kāṭum-gwafing*, or plaiting of the hair.

295. Then they sit them down to a feast, for a sheep has surely been slain for the purpose, and maybe three. And when they have eaten and are filled, the old lady bids the mistress of the mourning set a day for the *kāṭum gwafing*, or plaiting of the hair. So she sets a time a week or ten days hence. But the soap which the ladies brought with them is put in a heap, with soap

furnished by the mistress of the mourning. And a share is given to each of the ladies, whether they are to join in the half-mourning or not. So they depart, taking with them moreover *jushānda*, or boiled dates, the gift of the mistress of the mourning. But the wheat they brought is given to the serving-maid who did them service at the washing of the head.

Little ceremony among nomads.

296. Such is the washing of the head. But hill-folk and nomads, poor creatures, can ill afford to do the thing in this fine fashion. Yet do something they must, by hook or by crook.

Kātum-gwafing, the plaiting of the hair.

297. Henceforth till the plaiting of the hair the ladies ply their needles right busily, for the mourning apparel must be got ready. And on the appointed day they assemble once more in the house, each bringing a little oil and a little gum and one or two or three pounds of wheat. And when they have sat a while weeping and wailing, the old lady takes the mistress of the mourning by the wrist, and after much ado is suffered to plait her hair, the serving-maid aiding her in the task. Not until the hair of the mistress of the mourning is oiled and smeared with gum and scented and plaited, is it time for the plaiting of the hair of the mourners. But the hair of the other ladies they do not plait.

Donning the *sūg*, or mourning apparel.

298. Then they bring in the *sūg*, or mourning apparel. Heaven knows, the mistress of the mourning needs no pressing to don the gloomy garb. Nay rather, 'tis with a cold sigh that the old lady proffers her the apparel. "Mother!" she says, "never did we look to see this sad day befall you. And yet, methinks, what God sends must needs be acceptable in our eyes." And it's all so piteous, the mourners can scarce see to put on the apparel for their stream of tears.

Fixing the period for the wearing of mourning.

299. Then they ask the mistress of the mourning for how long she will ordain the wearing of the mourning apparel. And she answers them roundly, that the good old rule is good enough for her: twelve months for a

male, and for a female nine. Thereupon they entreat her to abate somewhat of the term, for sooth to tell, the old rule is out of date. And if she has a husband and sons and brothers to think of, she will soon give way. Five weeks maybe will suffice her, though she may stand out for three months, or even for six. But if it be a chief that is dead, full twelve months will go by before they doff the garb of mourning. All this while no other dress is worn; howbeit they wash the mourning apparel every now and then. Nor when they plait their hair, do they smear it with gum or scent it, until such time as they issue forth from the mourning.

Modern tendency to cut it short.

300. Times have changed, even among the Mēngal and the Bīzanjav and the Māmasanī, who used to drag out the term for the wearing of mourning two sad years and more. In truth, they now look upon over-long mourning as a mighty unlucky business. For in the old days it happened often enough that a mourning dress once donned was never doffed. They mourned so long, that Death would be on his rounds again, and they would have to mourn afresh. Small wonder then, that they have grown content to lay the gloomy apparel aside betimes.

Different kinds of mourning apparel.

301. Now the mourning apparel is of divers fashion. Well-to-do ladies of Sarāwān wear white head-dress and shift. Red, you may be sure, is never worn in mourning: it is the marriage colour; and a widow may not wear it even though her mourning be over. The shift is embroidered with plain embroidery, but with many of the points and marks and patterns left out. Thus a mother who has lost an only son will have no *chaṭ* or *laṛ* or *niām-ṭik* on her shift. And the shift of a widow who has lost her eldest son will be embroidered with plain thread. But a widow who is the mother of children will keep the *niām-ṭik* and the *gul-gulchik* on her shift, in token that she is the mother of sons despite her widowhood. Moreover, she fears that she might be bereft of children into the

bargain, should she wear her shift quite plain, for all the world like a childless widow. In Jhalawān the colour of mourning is black. Yet as the workaday woman in Jhalawān wears black at all times, you will have to peer mighty close for the embroidery, to see whether she's in mourning or not.

Significance of the neck-cord.

302. And a widow must discard her *bandōk*, that cord of red silk with its pretty silver tassels wherewith the collar is fastened. In its stead she will use a fastener made of plain thread, white or black, so long as she's in mourning. And here's a bit of gossip not many know of. Among the Raisānī, in the chief's branch at any rate, a widow will still wear a fastener of white thread even after the mourning is over, whether she have children or no. But should she put on her red *bandōk* after all, 'tis a sign to announce that she has it in mind to marry again.

Discarding the jewellery.

303. And a widow who is left without sons to cheer her widowhood must strip her jewellery off hands and arms and ears and nose and feet. But if she has a son to mourn her loss with her, she will wear her *challav*, or finger-rings, and her *vaṭ*, the small ring in her nose, and *paṇaṛā*, or ear-rings. And the ornaments that she strips off on her widowhood, she lays aside for life, so be she marries not again.

Seclusion of the mourners.

304. Now so long as the mourning apparel is worn, the mourners keep themselves aloof from all gatherings of company. If there be a wedding among the kin, the merry-makers will bid the mistress of the mourning and her mourners to the feast right graciously. Yet great would be the scandal if they came. But should a dear one be stricken down with disease, the mistress of the mourning will step over to the house in the dead of night. A few whispered inquiries, and she is gone under cover of the dark. Even though there's a death among the kin, she will not go to offer comfort. But there's naught amiss should she send one of the mourners in her stead. And if she does not hold herself aloof, but gads about

shamelessly, the women will point the finger of scorn at her, and say: "God preserve *us* from trampling our dear ones under foot, in our hurry to be after strangers!" Yet the mistress of the mourning looks to others to come and comfort her. And should one be late in coming, there'll be a sting in the courtesy of her greeting: no doubt it was the henna on her feet that kept her so long in coming; ah, yes! she quite understood. And the shaft strikes home, I warrant, if the visitor is one that has long looked for marriage in vain.

No mourning apparel worn by the men.

305. Such is the wearing of mourning apparel among the womenfolk. But neither in Sarāwān nor in upper Jhalawān do the men don any mourning. To be sure, among the Mēngal or Bīzanjav, or others of lower Jhalawān, a man will sometimes wear a black turban for a month or two; but the custom is borrowed from the folk of Makrān. And if a son or a brother or some other dear kinsman be foully done to death, a man in lower Jhalawān will wear a black turban, till such time as he can wipe out blood with blood.

Sāl tiṇing, or keeping the anniversary of a death.

306. Carefully do we count the months from the day on which the dead died. For twelve months hence on the selfsame day do we keep holiday, and hold a feast for the kith and kin. And the widow, I reckon, will remember the day, though all forget; for on that day is she free to marry again. Howbeit the longer the time she passes in mourning widowhood, the greater is her pride.

The feast among the wilder Jhalawāns.

307. And the wilder folk in Jhalawān make a great to-do over the feast, above all if the dead died without issue or heir. In the morning they take a number of sheep and goats and drive them to the graveyard. There they visit the grave of their dead, and then go a little way apart, and slaughter the sheep and the goats. They slaughter as many as they list; howbeit the number, to be sure, must be odd. And by the roadside they set three cooking-stones we call a *kutagh*, and by the side of

one *kutagh* they set another, and yet another and another. And when they have set the cooking-stones all in a row, they set yet a second row alongside the first. Now if you chanced to pass by, you could tell how many beasts had been slain for the feast. For the one row of stones is for cauldrons for the boiling of the flesh, and the other for pans for the baking of the bread; and for each sheep or goat that is slaughtered there must be one cauldron and one pan. And when the flesh is cooked and the bread is baked, they sit them down to the feast. And on the spot they build a mosque or two in memory of the dead. In the middle thereof they pile up a few stones, and upright on the pile they set another stone in honour of a male; howbeit for a female no upright stone is set. Now this custom was once common in Jhalawān, as you may guess from the rows of stones by the roadside and the mosques and all. Yet in these days it's only the wilder folk among the Zahrī and Mēngal that keep it up.

Avalikō Īd, the first Īd after a death.

308. Early on the morning of the first Īd after a death in the house, the kith and kin come to the chief mourner and bid him rise and keep holiday. But he makes demur, till one among them takes him by the wrist and entreats him. So with much ado he dons his holiday clothes and puts antimony to his eyes. Off go the kinsmen and deck themselves out for the merry-making; for until the chief mourner has donned his holiday clothes, it would ill beseem them to don theirs. Nevertheless in the house of the dead there is no holiday feasting; yet the daily meal is surely eked out with dishes sent by the kin. But the womenfolk keep no holiday nor change their clothes that day. For the space of half an hour do they drone out dirges with the mistress of the mourning, notwithstanding that the mourning may be over and done with. And when they urge her to keep holiday, she bids them wait till the morrow.

Mulla tūlifing, setting a mulla to watch at the grave.

309. But we must hark back to the soul of the dead that was laid to rest in the graveyard. Now for the first three nights after the burial, and maybe longer, a mulla is set to watch at the grave. With him watch his disciples. And for their comfort the kinsmen furnish food and a tent or other shelter, and pay them well for their pains. Night and day they watch by the grave, reciting the Holy Writ. For during the first three nights those dread angels, Munkir and Nakīr, come to the grave and tax the soul shrewdly touching his faith and all that he has done in this world. And the poor sinner takes comfort from the presence of the mulla and the sound of the holy words, and is stayed in the awful inquest.

Presentation of clothes to the mulla.

310. And on the evening of the first day the mulla is called into a room, where such of the womenfolk who do not live behind the veil are assembled. And they bestow upon him the clothes that the dead wore, and a new set of raiment and a cup, as part of his recompense for the washing of the body. And as he takes them, he lifts up his hands and prays the Almighty to bless the soul of the dead with peace everlasting.

Lighting up the *tan-shōd*.

311. Now every evening when the sun is set, the soul of the departed comes to the place where its body was washed for the burial, and then passes on to see how the kith and kin are faring. Hence it is that night after night for three nights they keep a lamp burning in the place of washing, and thereafter every Thursday night for the space of forty days. For it were churlish to leave the poor soul to grope its way thither in the dark, when it came on its rounds. Moreover, if the dead was a

man of rank or honour in this world, we set a wall round the place where his body was washed, or mark it out with stones. Folk might else come trampling over the ground, not knowing that the ground on which they trod was holy ground.

312. And for the better comfort of the soul—for they would not have him think that he is lightly forgotten—the kin cook some meat and rice and sweetmeats in the house, and set as much in readiness as a man would eat at a meal. This we call the *fātihanā iragh*, and it is fetched away by the mulla or one of his disciples. Every evening after sunset for at least forty days do they spread out the meal, and thereafter every Thursday for at least six months. And whatever the poor soul may think of it, the mulla or some beggar or other is glad enough of it, I warrant.

Fātihanā iragh, meals for the departed soul.

313. And every Thursday afternoon for the first seven weeks they summon the mulla with his disciples. To be sure, if they be poor folk, three or five times will suffice, for the ceremony costs somewhat. And the holy men sit them down in the nearest mosque and fall to reading the Korān. And the mulla reads one chapter and his disciples read others. So small wonder if the Korān is read from cover to cover before the sun sinks. Then the mulla and the disciples and other holy men go with the near kin into the house; for a sheep was slain and roasted while they were at their task. But before they break bread, they raise hands and pray for the peace of the soul of the departed. So they sit them down to the feast.

Khatma, or the recitation of the Korān.

314. Now the eve of most high festivals in the year—but not of the two Īds—is All Souls' Eve. And the holiest of all is the eve of the tenth day of the Muharram, that we call *Imāmāk*. In the morning the ladies of the house cook the daintiest of dishes of rice and meat and what not. And towards sunset they call in the mulla, and the kith and kin forgather together. And something from each

Mūrdaītā nan, All Souls' Eve.

dish is placed on a platter before the mulla. And he reads a chapter from the Holy Writ, and lifts up his hands in prayer. He prays that the heavenly recompense for their charity may fall on the soul of the Prophet and of the saints and of all the dead of the household. Each he calls by name, and that there may be no mistake, he adds thereto the name of the mother. And he prays for the peace of the martyrs who fought and died for the true Faith. And he prays for the remission of the sins of the dead of the household, both of those whose names he remembers, and of those whose names he has forgotten, but God must know. But the old ladies and the children in the room leave the poor man no peace: "Don't forget granny!" "Please put in uncle's name!" "There now, if he hasn't forgotten father!" For they long for the dainty fare spread before them, but until the mulla has done his prayer, it must lie untouched. But when at last he has rehearsed the roll of the dead, the food allotted to the souls of the dead is made over to him. Yet is he not suffered to take his leave until he has offered up prayers apart for the souls of the little children; but for them no rice nor meat is allotted —naught save a little milk and fruit and sweetmeats. Then they send out dishes to the neighbours and kinsfolk. And many a dish is sent to the house in return.

Visiting the graves on the tenth of the Muharram.

315. And early on the morrow the head of the house sets forth to the graveyard, one or two of the kinsmen bearing him company. With him he takes some red pulse and a jar full to the brim with rose petals and *mōrt* leaves and water. And at the grave of one of his dead he stands, and raising his hands he prays for the peace of the soul. Then he scatters half a handful of red pulse over the head of the grave, and all around he sprinkles water and leaves from the jar. So he passes on to the grave of another of his dead. And after he has gone the round of his departed kin, he honours the graves of others in like fashion. But here, as he

sprinkles the pulse and the water, he prays, saying: "God grant to thee, oh strange dead, the heavenly recompense for this my act, but oh! let it fall moreover on my dear ones who lie buried in a far-off land."

Less civilized folk dispense with these cere-monies.

316. Very keen are the villagers and others who have seen somewhat of the world over the reading of the Korān and the keeping of All Souls, and the furnishing of the evening meal for the departed soul, and the other customs touching which I have spoken. But hill-men and other wild folk can ill afford the like. Nor, to tell the truth, do they care for souls to be forever hanging about the house or encampment.

They are, in fact, modern.

317. And it's not alone the wild folk either that would discourage these visits from the dead. For old-fashioned ladies are very much of the same mind. Now men who live in villages and hobnob cheek by jowl with strange peoples, turn lightly to other ways and new-fangled manners. But among the womenfolk old ideas die hard. Surely they are not only the mothers of our children, but the jealous nurses of our customs from one generation to another. And it is to them you must go, if you would learn the ancient ways of our people. For as to the men, they live in the present. But the women are never more happy than when living the past over and over again. And they are ever railing at their men for catching at some new thing.

Bells not to be rung after dark.

318. Now if a child should strike a metal cup in the house after dusk and make it ring, the mother would scold him for a thoughtless rascal. For when the dead hear the sound of a bell in the stillness of night, they think the bells are ringing for the Day of Judgment, and raise themselves all agog at the sound. But when they find that the world is still moving in humdrum fashion, they curse the ringer of the bell that made a mock of them and roused them from their slumber for nothing.

Averting ill-luck on mention-ing the dead.

319. And womenfolk and men, too, for the matter of that, think it a plaguey unlucky business to take the name of the dead lightly on the lips. So if you have

to mention the dead and the living in the same breath, you should mind and add, "God pardon his sins!" or "The peace of the Faith be upon him!" after the name of the one, and "God grant him long life!" or "Let his name be apart!" or "Let his name remain long with his friends!" after the other. For the names of the living should not be numbered among the dead. Thus we will say: "May Shēr Khān's name long remain with his friends! What a fine shot that uncle of his was! Rahīm Khān, God pardon his sins!"

Avoiding the mention of the dead's name.

320. But many women will have it that one should never speak of the dead by name at all, once the *sei-shām*, or the third day's meal, is over. If needs must, one should talk in a roundabout manner of the untimely dead or the like. And anyone who blurts out the name will come in for a scolding, I'll be bound. In the daylight, to be sure, small's the harm. Yet the old granny of the house will rebuke the careless one and say: "Now don't you take his name again. Heaven pardon his sins! He lived his life, and what more does he want, I should like to know?" But if one of the young folk speak of the dead by name after the sun's gone down, there's a pretty to-do. The thoughtless babbler will get a taste of her tongue and a taste of her arm too, I warrant: "Let the nameless one be nameless and keep his face to himself, and not come poking his nose where he's not wanted. But as for you—take that, and don't you dare mention his name again after dark and all. God bless us! Does he want to scare the little ones out of their wits?"

Mischievous souls.

321. For the truth is that souls are mischievous folk, and the souls of the aged are the worst of the lot. And if disease hangs about a house after the death of some old crone, it's on her the women will lay the blame: didn't they always say she was a mischief-monger? Now the best way to be rid of the bane is to strike four iron pegs at the four corners of the grave when none is look-

ing. And if death enters the house again, they will do it without thinking twice about it, I reckon.

322. Nothing pleases the soul of some malicious old hag more than to haunt the dreams of a lad or lass in the house: won't he come to his old granny that loved him so dearly? And if the dreamer tells his dream to his mother and asks the interpretation thereof, she is mighty upset. "Drat the old meddler!" she says. "Never in all my born days have I seen the like! Can't she let things be, even in the grave?" And she bustles off to slaughter a sheep as a sacrifice to the saint of the house; and all of a tremble she mutters up a prayer to the saint of the house, beseeching him for pity's sake to preserve them from mischief. Not that she will let folks know there's aught amiss. "'Tis a sacrifice to the saint that I had vowed," is all she says. And the flesh is carved and given to the kinsfolk and neighbours. The haunting of dreams.

323. But if the old crone still haunts the lad's dreams for all that, he should take an onion and set it before him, and lift up his hands and whisper this prayer: "Almighty God, on the soul of So-and-So, the daughter of So-and-So"—for it's as well to give the mother's name that there may be no mistake about it—"do I bestow this onion, to the intent that never again may she trouble my dreams. Convey it to her, therefore, I pray you." And the prayer, let's hope, will be heard. Yet even so, the soul may be so pestilent, he won't be quit of her. So what must the old women of the house do, but gravely offer her a bit of dung, when they are alone out of doors. Various devices to prevent it.

324. Yet, strange to say, even this may not suffice. And if disease and death are busy in the household, the old women will whisper among themselves that the old hag must be feasting on her winding-sheet. And the menfolk are let into the secret before long, and they aren't left a moment's peace after that, you may be sure. All will not do. They must just open up the grave and see The last resort.

who's right. Yes, you may laugh, and small blame to you. Yet he who laughs last, laughs loudest all the world over. And though I myself have never seen the sight, there are folk who can tell how they have found an old hag with a strip of the shroud stuffed in her mouth, and rags thereof clenched in her hands. And old wives say there's nothing for it then but to sell all the dead had in this world and give the money in alms to the poor. "God preserve us all!" say you. And "Amen to that!" say I.

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